

Summer 6-13-2014

Uneven Housing Development and the Spatial Negotiation of Class in Nanjing, China

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UNEVEN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND THE SPATIAL NEGOTIATION OF CLASS IN
NANJING, CHINA

by

SARAH ELIZABETH TYNEN

B.A., The George Washington University, 2011

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Geography

2014

This thesis entitled:
Uneven Housing Development and the Spatial Negotiation of Class in Nanjing, China
written by Sarah Elizabeth Tynen
has been approved for the Department of Geography

John O'Loughlin

Timothy Oakes

Date: 15 May 2014

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

IRB protocol #13-0149

ABSTRACT

Tynen, Sarah Elizabeth (M.A., Geography Department)

Uneven Housing Development and the Spatial Negotiation of Class in Nanjing, China

Thesis directed by Professor John O'Loughlin

The discourses of free-market economic reform policies in China have encouraged the decentralization of state power and devolution of fiscal responsibility to local governments. The restructuring of local state control under the mounting pressures of economic globalization provides a broader political-economic context for the changing built and social environments of the Chinese city. When the central government permitted city officials to lease state-owned land to private real estate developers in 1998, the resulting acceleration of housing redevelopment in a rapidly urbanizing China dramatically transformed complex socio-spatial divisions between various groups in the city of Nanjing. I examine urban citizenship, modernity, and private homeownership through participant observation and interviews examining how various social groups in China (i.e. rural migrants, urban poor, urban middle-class) negotiate the construction of new and transforming class boundaries. Through an ethnographic study in five field sites—two gated communities, two public housing compounds, and one old city neighborhood—I explore the everyday experience of residents in the midst of urban housing redevelopment. Using Lefebvre's concept of the production of space and Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony, I link the economic and cultural domains of class construction to further understand the dynamic interplay between broader political-economic context and individual lived experience. My interrogation of the built and social environments of urban China sheds light on the antagonisms and alliances between social groups, the representations and practices of old city preservation

and demolition, and the effects of economic reform on daily life. I illustrate that uneven housing development constitutes changing spatial dimensions of class in Nanjing, China. This study illuminates the theoretical and practical implications of uneven development on social cohesion, economic growth, and political stability.

Keywords: class, landscape, development, privatization, inequality, culture, political economy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was made possible first and foremost by the many people of Old Nanjing and Nanjing who I cannot acknowledge by name. I am forever indebted to the people who welcomed me into their homes and enthusiastically answered my many questions. I am also especially grateful for those who shared their thoughts, dreams, desires, opinions, and life stories over the course of many months. I owe thanks to my roommates and host families for inviting me to be a part of their families, and for putting up with my unending questions for months at a time. I am indebted to my many friends and companions over the course of my time in Nanjing, who taught me Chinese slang, celebrated Chinese New Year with me, and took me on trips to their hometowns in the countryside. I dedicate this work to them.

My adviser, John O'Loughlin, provided unwavering support while patiently listening to my ideas and critically reviewing many drafts of this thesis. University of Colorado has provided an academic home and stimulating intellectual environment from which this thesis was built. For constantly challenging my ideas, I thank especially Tim Oakes, Joe Bryan, Elizabeth Dunn, Yang Yang, Ashley Rumble, and Shawin Roudbari. I am grateful to my institutional affiliates at Nanjing University, Professors Chen Yunqian and Wang Hongyang, as well as transcription assistance from my research assistant Wang Nan. Janet Upton at IIE Fulbright office in Beijing also provided support during my fieldwork. Thank you also to Tang Shuxia, Shen Pingping, Sun Xiaojing, Gao Min, Wang Yingxin, and the Xia family for teaching me Chinese during my first year in Nanjing.

This research was made possible by funding from the U.S. Student Fulbright Program (2011-2012) and the National Science Foundation East Asian and Pacific Summer Institute for Graduate Students (2013). Previous versions of Chapter 4 were presented at the 2014 Critical

Geography Conference in Boulder, CO and at the 2014 Political Geography Pre-Conference in Tampa, FL. Previous versions of Chapter 5 were presented at the 2014 Urban Affairs Association meeting in San Antonio, TX and at the Association of American Geographers meeting in Tampa, FL.

Finally, I acknowledge Sara Fall, Grace Rexroth, and Nathan Pipelow at the University of Colorado Writing Center for commenting on countless drafts of this work and explaining academic writing to me. I'd also like to thank the members of the Master's Thesis Working and Support Group, who led by Dr. Glenda Russell at the University of Colorado Counseling and Psychological Services provided encouragement and advice. I must thank the Easton's Brazilian JiuJitsu family for providing a physical outlet for my stress and frustration, and teaching me that nothing in life worth having comes easy. I also owe gratitude to my Mom and Dad for teaching me that life is inherently unfair, and to Sarah and Tyler for giving me something to look forward to on the weekend. Last but certainly not least, I thank Evan for commenting on drafts of this work, as well as providing constant love and companionship since this project began almost three years ago.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: STATE RESCALING IN URBAN CHINA

I. Problem Statement and Research Questions.....	1
II. Local Politics in China: The Pressures and Politics of Economic Globalization.....	5
<i>A. Decentralizing State Power: Urban Entrepreneurialism and Neoliberalism</i>	
<i>B. Rescaling State Power: Territory and the Land Market</i>	
III. Conclusion.....	21

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS: GRAMSCI AND LEFEBVRE

I. Gramsci and Cultural Materialism: Understanding Class and Landscape.....	24
<i>A. Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony</i>	
<i>B. Class Formation in Economic and Cultural Domains</i>	
<i>C. Landscape and Class Formation</i>	
II. Lefebvre: The Spatial Triad and the Production of Space.....	33
<i>A. Bridging Idealism and Materialism</i>	
<i>B. The Production of Space</i>	
<i>C. Lefebvre and State Space</i>	
III. Conclusion.....	43

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEXT OF NANJING AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

I. Geographical, Historical, and Economic Context of Nanjing.....	45
<i>A. History of Nanjing</i>	

<i>B. The Urban-Rural Divide</i>	
II. The Shift from the Mao Era to Post-Mao Era.....	57
<i>A. Demolition and Segregation</i>	
<i>B. Previous Case Studies of Nanjing in the Transitional Economy</i>	
III. Methodology.....	62
<i>A. Interviews and Coding</i>	
<i>B. Location of Field Sites</i>	
IV. Conclusion.....	75
CHAPTER 4	
REARTICULATING CITIZENSHIP IN URBAN CHINA: RURAL MIGRANT WORKERS, INNER-QUALITY, AND “CIVILIZED” BEHAVIOR	
I. Introduction.....	77
II. Geographies of Urban Citizenship, Belonging, and Exclusion.....	82
<i>A. The Right to the City</i>	
<i>B. Bourdieu and Social Capital</i>	
III. Antagonisms and Alliances: Discourses of Fear, Chaos, and Civility.....	88
<i>A. Declining Importance of the Hukou: Economic Liberalization Trumps Socialist Legacy?</i>	
<i>B. Conflicting Attitudes between Locals and Migrants: Evidence of Social Stratification</i>	
<i>C. Discourses of Inner-Quality: Producing the Civilized City</i>	
<i>D. Discourses of Fear, Ignorance, and Chaos of the Migrant Worker</i>	
IV. Conclusion.....	106
CHAPTER 5	
DILAPIDATED LANDSCAPES: CONTESTING URBAN MODERNITY IN OLD NANJING	

I. Introduction.....	110
II. Reading the Landscape? State Manipulation and Power Relations.....	114
III. Constructing Cultural Landscapes of Modernity and Backwardness.....	118
<i>A. Representations of Old Nanjing by the Nanjing City Government at the Urban Planning Museum: Constructing the Modern Versus Traditional Binary</i>	
<i>B. Representations of Old Nanjing by the Middle-Classes: Constructing Uncivilized Inhabitants of Old Nanjing</i>	
<i>C. Representations of Old Nanjing by Residents: Perspectives of Locals and Migrants</i>	
<i>D. Practices of Eviction and Demolition in Old Nanjing by the Nanjing City Government</i>	
<i>E. Everyday Practices: Contesting Urban Modernity and Rural Backwardness</i>	
IV. Conclusion.....	156
CHAPTER 6	
STATE, MARKET, AND SOCIETY IN URBAN CHINA: THE PRIVATIZATION OF HOMEOWNERSHIP AND THE FORMATION OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES	
I. Introduction.....	159
II. The Middle Classes and Gated Communities: Exclusion, Privilege, and Morality....	164
III. Ethnographic Sketches of the Material and Social Relations of Housing.....	169
<i>A. Urban Landscape Transformations: From Danwei Housing to Gated Communities</i>	
<i>B. Public and Social Life Transformations: From Egalitarian Community to Competitive Individuality</i>	
IV. Conclusion.....	191
CONCLUSION.....	195
REFERENCES.....	201
APPENDIX.....	217

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. National, Rural, and Urban Income Inequality from 1981-2001.....	3
2. China's Gini Coefficient from 2003-2012.....	3
3. China's Gini Coefficient Compared.....	4
4. Map of China.....	46
5. Maps of the Uneven Development of Jiangsu Province.....	47
6. Map of the Location of Nanjing within Jiangsu Province.....	48
7. Map of the Spatial Concentration of Poverty in Nanjing.....	49
8. The Nanjing City Skyline.....	50
9. Photo of Old Nanjing.....	51
10. Photo of the Old Nanjing Skyline.....	51
11. The 2014 Youth Olympic Stadium in Nanjing.....	58
12. Two Propaganda Posters for the Youth Olympics.....	59
13. Map of Old Nanjing.....	71
14. A Typical Dwelling in Old Nanjing.....	72
15. The Typical Landscape of Old Nanjing.....	72
16. Photo of a High-Rise Gated Apartment Complex.....	74
17. Photo of a <i>Danwei</i> Apartment Building.....	75
18. Photo of a Rural Migrant Waste Picker.....	83
19. Photo of a Rural Migrant Street Vendor.....	92
20. Bus Stop Propaganda.....	98
21. Bus Stop Propaganda.....	98
22. Exhibit at the Urban Planning Museum.....	120
23. Urban Planning Museum Exhibit.....	121
24. Interactive Exhibit.....	122
25. Protection of the Well-Known Historical and Cultural City.....	124
26. Images of Futuristic City Plans.....	125
27. A Typical Dwelling in Old Nanjing.....	135
28. Photo of Demolition Practices.....	143
29. Satellite Image of Demolition in Field Site.....	145
30. Before the Demolition.....	146
31. After the Demolition.....	146
32. Eviction Markings.....	147
33. A House in Section C with Propaganda Banners.....	147
34. Demolition and Eviction Markings and Posters.....	148
35. Cigarette and Alcohol Shop.....	150
36. Waste Picking.....	151
37. Playing Mahjong.....	152
38. Grandma Wang's Thrift Store.....	152
39. Playing Chinese Chess.....	154
40. Sitting Around and Chatting.....	155
41. Typical <i>Danwei</i> Housing.....	160

42. A High-Security and Upscale, Gated Community.....	161
43. A Typical <i>Danwei</i> Apartment Building.....	171
44. A Typical <i>Wuye Guanli</i> Housing Compound.....	172
45. Security Concerns.....	179
46. Security in a Typical Alley in Old Nanjing.....	179

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: STATE RESCALING IN URBAN CHINA

I. Problem Statement and Research Questions

Cities around the world are facing immense challenges due to rapid post-industrial economic transformations, ranging from the deterioration of livelihoods in Detroit and homelessness in Los Angeles to the expansion of slums in Mumbai and unprecedented rural to urban migration in Shanghai. Other cities closely connected in the global economy are encountering similar problems, especially regarding housing provision, slum eviction, and socioeconomic inequality. The city of Nanjing in eastern China presents a particular case study in which to examine the challenges of urban housing because it is located in a Communist state that encourages private capital investment and only recently became highly integrated into the global economy (see F. Wu and He 2005; Liu and F. Wu 2006b; F. Wu 2007c). The changes in urban governance resulting from the post-Mao economic reforms included the devolution of state power and fiscal responsibility to local city governments, especially on the east coast (F. Wu 2002; Hoffman 2011).¹ The local state restructuring policies in China are shifting the housing market from primarily state-provided residence to commercial development, resulting in altered socio-spatial formations and housing inequality that creates and reinforces new class boundaries (Hu and Kaplan 2001; Z. Li and F. Wu 2008; L. Zhang 2010).

¹ This phenomenon, sometimes also referred to as “rescaling state power” or “state restructuring” is defined as the process in which the central government devolves governance authority and fiscal responsibility to the local state.

My case study in Nanjing is particularly relevant in this context because it scrutinizes the state/market dichotomy and the effects of the state's role in regulating the land market. While the Chinese state owns all of the land, the central government granted city officials the *exclusive* authority to lease urban land (and urban land only) to private developers in 1998 (J. Xu, A. Yeh, and F. Wu 2009). The resulting commodification of public land by city governments encouraged the rapid pace of new commercial housing development that followed. Because there are significant economic, political, and social incentives for local officials to proceed with large-scale urban redevelopment projects at an extremely accelerated pace (Hsing 2010), widespread dispossession of the urban poor through residential eviction and demolition is common (Ma and Lin 1993; F. Wu 2004; Shin 2009). Chinese cities were hence transformed into a highly variegated landscape of high-rise apartment complexes dotted with low-income areas of old city dilapidated housing, socialist-style public housing, and rural migrant makeshift housing (W. Wu 2002). Variegated types of neighborhood governance is a growing trend that geographically and socially separate the lower, middle, and upper classes (Tomba 2009; S. Li, Zhu, and L. Li 2012).

China's income inequality has increased dramatically in the past thirty years. China's income inequality measured by the Gini coefficient grew from .280 in 1981 to .491 in 2008 (Ravallion and S. Chen 2007; "Inequality: Gini Out of the Bottle" 2013).² The Gini coefficient dropped slightly to .474 in 2012.³ This level is comparable to the United States, where the U.S. census bureau reported the Gini coefficient to be .469 in 2010 (Rabinovitch 2013). The

² The Gini coefficient measures inequality among values of a frequency distribution (e.g., levels of income). Zero means perfect equality and 1.0 means one person owns all of the wealth. According to the United Nations, a number above .4 is considered above the "danger level" of inequality for a national population sample. The numbers here include adjustment for Cost-Of-Living (COL) difference.

³ The official figures shown here represent National Bureau of Statistics data and are controversial because a survey published in 2012 by researchers at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in China found that China's Gini coefficient had reached 0.61 in 2010 (Rabinovitch 2013).

burgeoning inequality points to a growing urgency to study the potential social instability resulting from the staggering increase in inequality since 1981 (see figures 1-3).

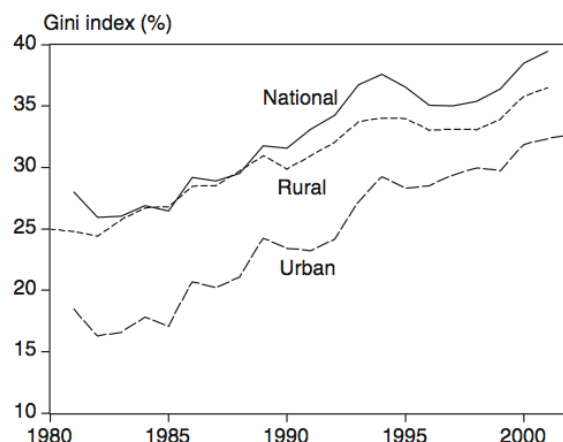


Fig. 5. Income inequality in rural and urban areas and nationally.

Figure 1: National, Rural, and Urban Income Inequality from 1981-2001: Here is a graph from Ravallion and S. Chen (2007, 21), which shows the increase of the national Gini coefficient from .2798 in 1981 to .3945 in 2001. The rural levels of inequality increased from .2473 in 1981 to .3648 in 2001. The urban levels of inequality increased from .1846 in 1981 to .3232 in 2001. During this time period, the rural areas experienced higher levels of inequality, while the urban areas saw a more dramatic increase in inequality. *Source:* Ravallion, Martin, and Shaohua Chen. 2007. "China's (Uneven) Progress Against Poverty." *Journal of Development Economics* 82 (1): 1–42.



Figure 2: China's Gini Coefficient from 2003-2012: Here is a graph from *The Financial Times* showing the change of Gini coefficient from .479 in 2003 to a peak of .491 in 2008, then down to .474 in 2012. *Source:* Rabinovitch, Simon. 2013. "China Wealth Gap Data Stoke Scepticism." *The Financial Times*, January 18.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1feb0128-614a-11e2-957e-00144feab49a.html#axzz307jZ0BAu>.



Figure 3: China's Gini Coefficient Compared: This graph from *The Economist* represents data from 2012 that compares China's Gini coefficient to other countries around the world, ranking China as one of the most unequal countries in the world. *Source*: "Inequality: Gini Out of the Bottle." 2013. *The Economist*, January 6. <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21570749-gini-out-bottle>.

In this thesis, I integrate the cultural and economic spheres to examine the relationship between housing development and socioeconomic inequality in Nanjing, China. My work builds on L. Zhang's (2010) theory of the "spatialization of class" in China, Lefebvre's theory of social formation through spatial production, and Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony in order to contextualize class antagonism in broader economic structures, cultural practices, and everyday life. While my fieldwork covered one Chinese city, Nanjing, these theorists illuminate the broader theoretical relationship illuminated in my study between state, society, and space that profoundly influences the way we see the world and interact with the environment and people around us. Drawing on Hanser's (2008) ethnography of the retail industry in China, I too argue that my case study of class boundaries in various neighborhoods in Nanjing, China "is *not* autonomous from larger social changes taking place in China. It is a field in which the 'search for distinction' and the production of social differences tell us much about Chinese society writ large" (11, emphasis in original). Furthermore, my investigation has practical implications for

understanding the challenges of urban growth and development, housing allocation, and social cohesion facing many cities around the world. Investigating questions on how the state and market affect Chinese society can further illuminate potential causes of and solutions for uneven development and social divisions.

In this study, I seek to answer the question: how does recent spatial production create new social and material relations in contemporary urban China? In order to shed light on this question, the issues to be addressed in the empirical chapters are as follows: how important are daily practices in determining urban citizenship as belonging (chapter 4)? How are the homes and people of Old Nanjing regarded by the city government and residents through representations and practices (chapter 5)? How are transforming notions of private property ownership and the emerging middle classes constituted in and through the built environment and everyday practice (chapter 6)? China's income inequality is growing and my investigation of these questions will shed light on the implications of inequality for urban society.

II. Local Politics in China: The Pressures and Politics of Economic Globalization

The growth and transformation of Chinese cities in the past thirty years can only be understood with consideration of global processes at work on the ground in the local milieu. Indeed, the forces of global capital materialized in local politics continue to shape the trajectory of cities in wealthy and poor, democratic and authoritarian countries alike. I therefore draw from various literatures in urban studies and geography in order to situate my localized ethnography in broader global and national processes, especially that of the decentralization of state power and pursuit of capital interests. Examining the broader processes of global capital investment and state restructuring is crucial to understanding daily life China. Drawing from studies by Ong and Collier (2005) and Roy and Ong (2011), I argue that an active engagement with a carefully

chosen and diverse array of theories is the most appropriate way to engage with urban environments that simultaneously exhibit homogenous global processes and heterogeneous localized particularity. My goal is to engage in an iterative back and forth process between theory and data throughout the entire work. The process of building a bridge between theory and empirics necessarily critiques the ability of my choice of geographical theories to engage with data collected during fieldwork in China.

In this chapter, I review the literature that asks the question: how is the political-economic climate in China similar to and different from “democratic capitalism”? The theoretical debate regarding the nature of the state-market relationship in China is important because it sets the groundwork for understanding the broader political-economic context for the rest of my thesis. I move away from labels such as “capitalist” or “socialist” to stress that political-economic dynamics are more complex and fluid than rigid categorical divisions allow. Following Robinson (2006), I call for a comparative urbanism that goes against “exceptionalism” and stresses the importance of approaching all cities as “ordinary,” rather than through the lens of a “privileged modernity” of the West.

The literature that I cite in this section situates social phenomena within political-economic transformations of multiple scales. My departure point is the argument that transnational flows of capital and the rescaling of state power results in localized socio-spatial inequality and uneven development. I draw on Smith’s (2008) definition of uneven development to describe the contradictory processes of growth and stagnation across space and time as a direct result of capitalism:

these geographical patterns are the product of contradictory tendencies...the tendencies toward differentiation and universalization, or equalization, emanate side by side in the belly of capitalism...Space is neither leveled out of existence nor infinitely differentiated. Rather the pattern which results is one of *uneven development*, not in a general sense but

as the specific product of the contradictory dynamic guiding the production of space. Uneven development is the concrete manifestation of the production of space under capitalism. (122, emphasis in original)

I further build on Marston (2000) in understanding scale as socially constructed. I borrow Jessop's (2005) definition of scale: "the nested (and sometimes not so nested) hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size, e.g., local, regional, national, continental and global. Scale is typically the product of social struggles for power and control" (425). By multiscale, I mean the "tangled hierarchies of scale" that encompass simultaneous political and economic exchanges across various geographical spaces and levels, including the global, national, and local, wherein all scales influence each other in a mutually constitutive and dialectical relationship (Jessop 2005, 426).

First, I engage with the critiques and applications of "neoliberalism" regarding Chinese state space and contend that "urban entrepreneurialism" is a more useful concept than "neoliberalism" for understanding the role and importance of the local state in China. Secondly, I outline two different approaches that debate the *effects* of state restructuring in urban China. Some theorists suggest that state restructuring under recent transformations of the global economy is causing the "hollowing out" of the state, often referred to as "state decline arguments" (see Jessop 1990, 2003 for arguments and counter-arguments of the epistemology of state centrism). In following Brenner (1998, 2004), I argue that state restructuring in China results not in the disappearance of the state, but rather in the redistribution and rearticulation of state power and "territorialization" on multiple scales. It is the latter that I find most useful to understanding my case study in China. I do not dispute the extensive documentation that state restructuring in China under the pressure of economic globalization devolved central state power to the local governments (see F. Wu 2002; F. Wu 2006; F. Wu 2007a).

The literature review therefore accomplishes two primary goals: 1) it situates my work in the scholarly conversation found in the urban studies and China literature, and 2) it explains and interrogates the current scholarship that describes China's political-economic climate (is China neoliberal, socialist, capitalist, or some kind of hybrid?). Although I do not assert that Chinese modes of governance are identical to Western ones, some important and dramatic political-economic transformations that have recently taken place in China resemble aspects of urban entrepreneurialism and state rescaling similar to those witnessed in the U.S. and other Western states.

A. Decentralizing State Power: Urban Entrepreneurialism and Neoliberalism

Background

A trend of decentralizing state power in the 1970s and 1980s transformed urban governance in many countries by giving more fiscal autonomy and responsibility to city governments. City governments under a neoliberal trajectory often form growth coalitions with private businesses (Cox 1993). The neoliberal mode of governance creates inter-city competition to attract capital investment, producing “entrepreneurial cities” that behave in a manner similar to private firms (Leitner 1990; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999).⁴ Urban studies scholars in the “entrepreneurial turn” literature generally assert that since states began adopting neoliberal policies and downsizing central governments, urban entrepreneurialism promoted the reorientation of urban governance away from the provision of welfare and towards a focus on growth and development (Harvey 1989). Intense inter-city competition to ensure a place in the national and international economy exacerbates the negative consequences of entrepreneurial

⁴ Urban entrepreneurialism is a tradition that dates back to the beginning of capitalism, beginning with the Hanseatic League and Italian City-States. In this paper, I will focus on the contemporary version of entrepreneurial cities in the context of the rise of neoliberalism that began in the 1970s.

cities, such as uneven development and the displacement of the poor to the urban fringe (Hall and Hubbard 1998; Brenner and Theodore 2003; Ward 2003).

The shift from the Fordist to Post-Fordist mode of production underlies the shift to neoliberal modes of governance (Peck and Tickell 1992). In simplified terms, Post-Fordism involved the deregulation of the market, while the state still played an important role: “Fordism depended, evidently, upon the nation state taking—much as Gramsci predicted—a very special role within the overall system of social regulation” (Harvey 1990, 135). As Harvey (2005) explains, the function of the neoliberal market depends on interference by the state. Neoliberalism concerns the economic liberalization associated with capitalism that began taking root in the 1970s. The term usually refers to policies that encourage free trade, privatization, deregulation, and enhancement of the private sector. The policies were spread and encouraged around the world through the World Bank and IMF loan policies. When defining neoliberalism in this way, an important distinction to make is that between “ideological neoliberalism” and “existing neoliberalism.” Whereas the ideological neoliberalism refers to that defined above, “existing neoliberalism” is defined as the *increased* role of the state in regulating the market and ensuring the market to function (Harvey 2005). Thus the actual role of the state in the Post-Fordist mode of production is fiercely debated, a disagreement that is reflected in the academic dispute regarding the extent of state involvement in urban China and applicability of “neoliberalism” to the Chinese context (He and F. Wu 2009).

The complexity of the state-market relationship in China

Most simplified accounts describe the characteristics of China’s political-economy as a fusion of communist politics and capitalist economics (W. Zhang and Sun 2012). Some insist that China is a capitalist state under the guise of socialism (Hanser 2008), and others claim that

China is capitalist and neoliberal (J. Zhang 2012). Others contend that as a Communist country with a socialist marketplace, along with other factors such as control over the land market and hierarchical approach to governance, China exhibits unique exceptionalism (F. Wu 2007a). The description of China's economic condition ranges from the "Beijing consensus," to "authoritarian state-capitalism." Some scholars argue that China is nothing more than an authoritarian and developmental state modeled after Singapore (Ortmann 2012; Shatkin 2013). Others point to evidence that China's financial markets still are not fully liberalized and remain as key pillars of control and rule by the Chinese Communist Party (Panitch and Gindin 2013). Meanwhile China's success during the financial crisis under the state-controlled model may undermine the Western-dominated neoliberal system (Vivoda 2009; Chu 2010). I argue that the literature on the Western experience of neoliberal state restructuring is not enough to explain the characteristics of the local state in China. This section will explain the contentious use of the term "neoliberalism" to describe Chinese politics.

Some scholars attribute the uneven development and place-based promotion efforts that are characteristic of Chinese cities to the adoption of neoliberalism and capitalism to China (X. Ren 2008a, 2008b). The contentious application of the terms "neoliberalism" and "capitalism" to the Chinese case exemplifies an important debate in the literature regarding the extent to which the central and local government intervenes in the Chinese marketplace. Ong and L. Zhang (2008) describe their interpretation of neoliberalism as realized in China: "we maintain that the cross between privatization and socialist rule is not a 'deviant' form but a particular articulation of neoliberalism, which we call 'socialism from afar.' We call it this because state controls continue to regulate from a distance the fullest expression of self-interest" (2-3). While neoliberalism can be a useful analytic for understanding the type of socialist climate that often

persists in China (He and F. Wu 2009; Lin and A. Zhang 2014), one must recognize the divergences of neoliberalism as realized in China as opposed to the U.S., Brazil, or any other country. Harvey's (2005) focus on global capitalism neglects a more nuanced understanding of the role of the local state in China. Therefore, a geographical emphasis on scale helps illuminate various forms of privatization and sovereignty existing in multiple forms of urban governance (He and F. Wu 2009). Neoliberalism in China can thus be best understood as an assemblage of various interpretations of policy mobilized on the ground in local governments (Ong and Collier 2005).

Neoliberalism as realized in China

Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, in order to gain membership into the World Trade Organization (WTO), and especially after membership into the WTO in 2001, China has been adopting more evidently "neoliberal" policies (F. Wu 2002; Rofel 2007). According to scholars following the Western neoliberal approach, Chinese cities followed the same trajectory of uneven development and place-based promotion to take advantage of global capital mobility as those witnessed in the U.S. and Western Europe (F. Wu 2003; Shin 2009; Park, Hill, and Saito 2012). J. Zhang (2012) for example, writing on the capitalist agenda of Shenzhen party officials, says: "a genuine concern for distributional justice and common prosperity has diminished in the policy-making process monopolized by the ruling party elites, thus giving way to an increasingly neo-liberal, elitist urban agenda [in China]" (2854). According to these scholars advocating for a neoliberal approach to studying China's market transition, many aspects of the post-Mao urban politics of Chinese cities are remarkably similar to those in Western contexts (Harvey 2005; Lee and Zhu 2006).

While China is significantly different from many other countries since the state plays an important role in the property market, some scholars argue that China is overall leaning towards neoliberal approaches to governance and development (Ma and F. Wu 2005; F. Wu 2007b). For example, the application of urban entrepreneurialism in China is a valuable contribution to understanding the ways that cities function in China (for example, see F. Wu 2003; Shin 2009; Chien and F. Wu 2011). Urban entrepreneurialism is highly relevant to China, as cities compete for national and global recognition and capital investment. Inter-city competition was especially obvious during state-led efforts to build for the 2008 Beijing Olympics in order to achieve international recognition (Broudehoux 2007; X. Ren 2008a). Urban entrepreneurialism *as a form of neoliberalism* is a more useful concept than ideological neoliberalism for understanding the role of the local state in China.

Urban entrepreneurialism in China remains markedly different from other contexts in one key area: the land property market (Lin and A. Zhang 2014). The local states use their authority over land leases and their ability to intervene in the property market to shape trajectories of governance and assert local state territorialization (Chien 2010; Hsing 2010; Lin 2011). I draw on E. Yeh's (2013) study of the spatial relations of Chinese development in Tibet, where the process of territorialization is a "deeply material and embodied process that involves the transformation of both subjectivities and landscapes" (5). Territorialization understood in this way can be applied to local states in eastern Chinese cities as well (Hsing 2010; Hoffman 2011). In China, the city managers are Communist Party officials, not the elected representatives or business owners that one sees in the U.S. The decentralization of state power to the local governments in China encouraged localized territorialization when local governments were

granted the authority to intervene in the property market and granted control over land-use rights (Hsing 2006b).

Furthermore, F. Wu, J. Xu, and A. Yeh (2007) suggest that the devolution of central state power to the local state has transformed modes of urban governance, and argue that the local state has now adopted neoliberal, corporatist, and entrepreneurial tactics. They argue that the neoliberal mode of governance in China *transcends* the developmental state model, which is a model wherein the state is the main driving force of economic development, the model often used to describe Chinese development driven by the state (Yang and Wang 2008). In another example, Lee and Zhu (2006) use a case study of the housing market and provision of welfare services in Guiyang to argue that China is following a particularly Westernized neoliberal model of urban governance. Some anthropologists argue that China's modes of neoliberal governance are changing Chinese citizens' subjectivities (Hoffman 2011), and that under neoliberal governance rural migrants' notions of labor value and measurements of the self's value are changing (Yan 2003).

Some scholars assert that the state and centrally-planned economy have a relatively minor role to play in influencing the development of cities, providing evidence that points to the decentralization of the Chinese state, market-led urban development initiatives, retreat from socialist ideology, and market deregulation (A. Yeh and F. Wu 1999; F. Wu 2003). Other evidence points to the rise of local corporatism as a key institutional consequence of the recent rescaling of China's political economy (Yeung 2000). Some scholarship also points to the formation of neoliberal subjectivities, in which willing consumer subjects are constructed under the neoliberal governmentality of post-reform China (Hoffman 2006; Rofel 2007; Ong and L. Zhang 2008). These scholars provide evidence for the side of the debate that argues China is

becoming more neoliberal, and in turn, the central state is becoming less powerful in comparison to the local state.

Fulong Wu uses both empirical data sets from the Chinese government and fieldwork consisting of surveys and interviews from localized case studies to emphasize the importance of the role of the state in manipulating neoliberal discourses to justify its role in stimulating economic growth. He refers to the role of the state in Chinese cities as locally initiated globalization: “Foreign investment cannot act on its own without the support of the local state.... Foreign capital has to be embedded into local politics. The global-local nexus means that globalization is not simply a ‘homogenization’ process through which the global overcomes the local” (F. Wu 2007a, 5). The land-use rights law in China allows the state to use the free market to justify its engagement in the global economy and restore its political power: “Whereas the state’s legitimacy embedded in the public ownership of production has been eroded through marketization, the entrepreneurial project allows the state to tap the market to restore its role in response to perceived, as well as real, globalization” (F. Wu 2003, 1673). In fact, he argues, the local state has been *strengthened* by institutional reforms while relying on the socialist model for citizen support: “our view is that the legacy of state socialism only provides a convenient means for the local state to act” (F. Wu, J. Xu, and A. Yeh 2007, 16). In contrast to the Western model of state deregulation of the market, in China the local state achieves legitimization through economic rationality of the market and the state’s role as the primary market actor and builder (F. Wu, J. Xu, and A. Yeh 2007). In other words, the Chinese state uses neoliberal discourse as an excuse to intervene in the market and encourage the growth of the market. For the scholars that employ the analytic of neoliberalism to describe recent changes in China, the shift towards

neoliberal urbanism is directly related to the massive urban development projects that cause widespread demolition and displacement (He and F. Wu 2009; Shin 2009).

Divergences from the neoliberal model in China

I argue that Chinese state-led capitalism exhibits stark differences from the West, primarily stemming from a larger role of the government in managing the land market and a hierarchical approach to state governance (Ma 2005; Chien 2010). Chien and F. Wu (2011) even observe that although the real estate boom in China in the 1990s was primarily market-driven, urban economic growth has been largely state-driven from 2005 to present. L. Zhang (2010) argues that one way the state legitimizes its political power through market growth is by actively encouraging new construction projects and controlling the land market:

forced evictions and unprecedented displacement are essential to “postsocialist primitive accumulation,” propelled by the newly formed pro-growth coalitions between local governments and developers...I characterize this pattern of urban development as “accumulation by displacement” to accentuate the centrality of space in political and economic reconfigurations. (138)

The political economy of housing development in China creates a unique regulatory climate of state-led capitalism operating on the local level. For example, in Madrazo and Kempen’s (2012) study, they compare literature on socio-spatial divisions in Western (U.S. and Western Europe) and Chinese cities. While they assert that spatial patterns of segregation and inequality in China exhibit similar characteristics to those seen in the West, the research shows that the influence of the state and its institutions play a stronger role in China than in the West: “[t]he intertwined structure of party-state political power, the complex reciprocal relations between government and business, and the ingrained institutional factors” make the nature of divisions in Chinese cities unique (Madrazo and Kempen 2012, 165). In another U.S.-China comparative case study, the authors found that while government-business coalitions were the driving force of inner-city

development efforts in the U.S., in China urban development relies on “emerging local elites using decentralized state power to pursue fast growth in rising real estate markets” (Y. Zhang and Fang 2004, 286).

The literature on China points to the similarities of state decentralization in the West while asserting that state-led capitalism leads to significant differences in China. Chien (2010) uses the term “asymmetric decentralization” to describe the phenomenon of new urban governance in China where local officials have been granted greater autonomy and enormous fiscal power in simultaneous combination with political centralization of the CCP. Ong (2004) refers to this hybrid as “variegated sovereignty” to describe the “Chinese axis” of power through various places, an analysis that “requires identifying the specific assemblage of rationalities (political, economic, ethical) that interact to create the conditions of possibility for sovereignty” (73). According to Ma (2005) a unique approach must be applied to China for two main reasons. First, the government still uses a strict hierarchical structure and classification left over from the socialist system. Second, the state still plays a unique role in regulating and controlling the economy. He contends that China’s economy continues to be governed administratively through a special scalar system of spatial units:

I argue that the administrative rank of an area is one of the most important factors affecting China’s local space economy and that the administrative ranks of territorial units should be incorporated in the theorization of scales.... [Scale] is a representation, arena, scaffolding and organization of sociospatial formation. I argue that, in the Chinese context at least, a place’s administrative rank or level significantly affects its political and economic relations with other places. (Ma 2005, 480-81)

Scale should therefore be taken into more serious consideration because the nature of administrative units in China significantly affects local economic growth, social formation, and social regulation. In other words, Chinese urban governance takes on a socialist form in its top-

down hierarchical and highly structured administrative units, and a special consideration of scale within the Chinese socialist context must be considered. The next section provides an alternative to understanding urban transformation of China as a reterritorialization of the state across multiple scales.

B. Rescaling State Power: Territory and the Land Market

I define “territorialization” as the making, naturalization, and legitimization of state space (E. Yeh 2013). Jessop (1998) engages with an analysis of territorialization and the entrepreneurial city to apply his concept of state theory to the local state. For Jessop (1990, 1995), the decentralization of power on the national level resulted in more power on the local level. In other words, these processes of globalization and state capitalism resulted in the “hollowing out” of the central state. Brenner’s (1998) definition of “glocalism” and Swyngedouw’s (2000) notion of authoritarian governance highlights the idea that the state scale is actually not being eroded, but rather rearticulated and reterritorialized on the local and supra-state scales. For example, Swyngedouw et al. (2002) conducted a study of cities in twelve European countries to conclude that new forms of urban governance are characterized by less democratic and more elite-driven priorities. This is the perspective that I take to my study of Nanjing. Brenner (1999a) defines a glocal state as a global city that is the coordinate of state territorial power on a local and global level. Brenner disagrees with Jessop and the many other scholars in the entrepreneurial turn of the literature who suggest that state power is being transferred to the local. While Brenner (1999b) agrees that governance is changing, he disagrees with how territory is being reconfigured onto a glocal scale:

Territorialization and deterritorialization are constitutive moments of an ongoing dialectic through which social space is continually produced, reconfigured, and transformed under capitalism. Thus conceived, the contemporary round of globalization entails neither the absolute territorialization of societies, economies, or cultures on a global scale nor their

complete deterritorialization into a supra-territorial, distanceless, borderless space of flows, but rather a multi-scalar *restructuring* of capitalist territorial organization. (68, emphasis in original)

The implications of international capital flows on the rescaling of state power and shaping modes of urban governance includes the reterritorialization and rescaling of the state, which has resulted in a shift from local governments committed to social welfare to more authoritarian local governments focused on economic growth.

When evaluating China, it is more useful to apply Brenner's (2004) conception of the reterritorialization of the state on multiple scales than the "hollowing out" model. Brenner (1999b) illustrates that local states are not a static, discrete space, but rather a constantly changing territory comprised of dynamic social relations in constant interaction with the national, regional, and global as socially constructed scales. In China, decentralization strengthens the power of the state through localized political territorialization and the local state's control over the land market. When examining governance, the local scale is in constant tension and interaction with the national and global scales (Brenner 1998). Cities are key nodes in the process of state rescaling as the reconfiguration of the nation-state (Sassen 2001). Uneven development is the key outcome of the rescaling of state power because local states have the central aim to promote the competitiveness of their particular locations within broader spaces of competition at global scales.

Evaluation of the rescaling of state territorialization to urban China

Development in China is much more than simply capital accumulation and a spatial fix of investing in the built environment (Harvey 2005). Urban redevelopment in China is about the production and reproduction of local state power. Hsing (2010) provides crucial insight into the relationship between state and society through the land property market. Hsing (2006a) termed

the land market in China as “commodification without privatization.” She argues that land is the focus of local politics in urban China as land rents are the main way that the state controls and profits from the local political economy. Urban construction projects are the primary way that the state earns political legitimacy and economic profits (Lin 2007, 2011). She highlights the importance of the role of the local state in managing the real-estate market in order to assert its territoriality and legitimacy. Hsing (2010) defines territoriality as “spatial strategies to consolidate power in a given place and time” involving the local government’s occupation and domination of space (8). It is primarily through the local state’s regulation of land as a commodity that the state’s authority is exercised and territoriality is realized (Lin and A. Zhang 2014).

Hsing (2006b; 2006a) explores the way local officials use their power to lease land in order to reach economic development goals set by the state and receive promotions. The local political and economic restructuring in China began in the 1980s when municipal governments were granted greater authority in urban land management.⁵ The Ministry of Land Management was established in 1986 and by 1998 city governments were granted the exclusive authority to lease urban land from the central government: “land [now] serves as the main vehicle for the local state to consolidate its territorial authority in the era of fiscal and administrative decentralization” (Hsing 2006b, 577). These changes led to what Hsing (2006a) calls the “new urban politics of China,” described as decentralization of state power to the local governments; increased fiscal autonomy of the local state; local governments directing and participating in the market of commodified but not privatized urban land; and “transnational capitals [responding] to, instead of shaping, the agenda of the local market [in urban China]” (167). The power of the

⁵ Previously during the Mao era, the socialist legacy of land ownership in the form of the work unit (*danwei*), also known as *danwei* land masters or socialist landowners, controlled urban land management through the ownership and control of state-owned enterprises.

local government in shaping state-led capitalism and its ability to shape the land market is perhaps the most important distinction between Chinese and Western modes of governance.

The typical Chinese territorial approach to governance through active participation in urban land management and the property market does not automatically guarantee an increase in local state power (Lin 2011). Rather, local states must *earn* the authority to govern: “In their struggle for urban land control...municipal leaders face challenges and opportunities to define and defend the boundaries of their territorial power, and their governing capacity is tested and built” (Hsing 2006b, 591). In the West, the leaders win elections. In China, the leaders prove their authoritative legitimacy by devoting themselves to large-scale urban redevelopment and public infrastructure projects:

Redevelopment and infrastructure projects have the legitimacy of building a modern city and of public interests, giving the city government a higher moral ground. City governments and their young urban planners also launch ideological campaigns that promote the idea of efficient land use, which *rejects the socialist pattern* of allocating central locations to state-owned factories and schools. (Hsing 2006a, 176, emphasis added)

She describes the local governments’ attempts to maintain a socialist state in a market economy as municipal governments struggle against socialist work-unit (*danwei*) landowners and high-ranking state agencies to secure land rents from redevelopment projects. In other words, the Chinese government embraces and rejects various aspects of socialism to maintain legitimacy. More so than in the West, government officials invest in local and public infrastructure to solve the crises of overaccumulation and give the city government the “moral high ground.”

Hsing’s (2010) analysis highlights the importance of the role of society in resisting the state, what she deems as “civic territoriality.” The mobilization of local urban residents against the government to assert property and residential rights illustrates changing state-society relations as citizens engage in public protests against illegal land grabs by the city government

and private developers alike (Hsing and Lee 2010). The increase in protests in recent years illustrates that power in space is not given, but earned. Her insights are crucial as she uses ethnography to prove that the state plays a major role in the political economy of the land market in urban China. Hsing's (2010) Lefebvrian and Polanyian analysis lays the foundation for understanding the significance of Lefebvre for this case study. Lefebvre is particularly relevant because he is specifically interested in the role of the state in the production of space, and with the local state in urban China as heavily involved in the commodification of land, I use Lefebvre to further inquire on the state mode of production of space. Lefebvre also emphasizes the ways people appropriate space for their own use through the messiness of everyday practices, which will be further explored in the empirical chapters.

III. Conclusion

How is China similar to and different from Western countries? While some scholars insist that the term "neoliberal" cannot be applied to a communist state, others use neoliberalism as a theoretical tool to describe the growing prominence of discourses surrounding privatization and self-responsibility in China. In this section, I interrogated the theories of multiscalar globalization and neoliberalism to urban China. Based on my observations and findings, China exhibits urban entrepreneurialism as evidenced in its rapid pace of development, uneven development, and place-based competition. China's economic market remains highly distinguished from the conventional neoliberal model, however, primarily based on its role in managing the land market. Local states utilize their power over the land market to assert localized territoriality, shape trajectories of urban governance, and receive personal promotions. The local state legitimizes and expands its power through its management of the land market by collecting land rents and controlling the conditions of development. Due to this relationship, it is

not useful to think of China's central state as "hollowing out," but rather reterritorialized on multiple scales (Brenner 2004).

This section focused on the aspect of the capitalist political economy that encourages the devolution of central state power to the local governments. Indeed, extensive scholarship on urban China of the past twenty years clearly illustrates that since the economic reforms of 1978, China has experienced the decentralization of state control, increased fiscal autonomy and entrepreneurialism of local governments, and place-based competition for investment (F. Wu 2007a; F. Wu 2007b). While Western and Chinese scholars alike largely agree that there has been a rescaling of state power in China as a result of the reshaping of the country's relationship to the global economy since the 1970s, they disagree on the effects and whether the state has generally gained or lost power. The unique cultural and political-economic context of state-led capitalism in the context of shifting notions of private property and land is key to understanding the recent changes in the social and built environment of urban China. While the processes of residential eviction and demolition inevitably associated with urban redevelopment projects in China seem similar to that of gentrification in the U.S. and similar urban improvement projects around the world (He 2007), there are very different processes and historical contexts underlying these seemingly similar processes.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS: GRAMSCI AND LEFEBVRE

Scholars of China from inside and outside the country frequently employ conventional geographic theories (e.g., Foucault, Lefebvre, Agamben) to understand China (Ong 2006; H. Ren 2013). I use Gramsci and Lefebvre, as well as scholars that draw on them, as parts of my theoretical toolbox to explain my data. This chapter is devoted to understanding the use of these theoretical frameworks. In this project, I am inspired by T. Li (2007), who primarily uses Foucault in conversation with Marx and Gramsci to explain her ethnography of Indonesia:

my purpose in making these moves is not to construct a super theory, an improbably seamless amalgam. Rather, I tolerate the untidiness and tension introduced by different theoretical traditions because of the distinct questions they pose, and the tools they offer to guide my analysis. (19)

In taking a geographical approach to advance existing work in the urban studies literature, Lefebvre and Gramsci provide the best tools to explain the reproduction of social divisions and class inequality across space as I recorded in urban China. My aim is not to apply theory to the data, but rather to use theory as a departure point to engage with the data (see methodology section in chapter 3).

Bringing Gramsci and Lefebvre together in conversation with one another helps explain class, inequality, and the relationship between state and society. Specifically, first in understanding class as a dynamic, heterogeneous, and functional group embodying cultural and economic life fundamental to the production of space. Second, in examining the perpetuation of

inequality through cultural hegemony as a dynamic and contested process. Third, in focusing on the individual re-articulations, resistance, and embodiments of state power in everyday practice. I have divided this chapter into two major themes that are particularly relevant to the overall thesis: 1) cultural materialism, and 2) the production of space. In an effort to engage in an iterative process of connecting theory and empirics, throughout the thesis I illustrate the parallels and divergences between geographical theories and what I have witnessed in Nanjing.

I. Gramsci and Cultural Materialism: Understanding Class and Landscape

The theoretical tools of cultural materialism are useful for interrogating class formation and landscape. My Gramscian approach will help to illuminate the ways in which the homes and residents of Old Nanjing constitute and are constituted by class identities and divisions. In this section, I define the terms cultural materialism, class, and landscape (see chapter 5 and 6 for the empirical applications of these terms). I draw on Cresswell (2010) to define culture as the distinctive processes through which meaning and value are communicated, and how meaning becomes social and political. For Williams (1976), culture is the relationship between the symbolic and material. Culture thus plays a critical role in the production and reproduction of inequality. In this thesis, I examine the social construction of difference through cultural processes manifested in landscape. Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony offers helpful insights to understand the perpetuation of inequality.

A. Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony

Gramsci wrote in the particular political climate of Italy between 1915-1937, and so his writings reflect the working class and Communist movements of a democratic and newly unified Italy in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. Thus there are some inevitable limitations of Gramscian theory when examining contemporary China. For example, one of Gramsci's main

ideas was that democratic countries rule by consent and China is not a democratic country. I argue, however, that Gramscian “consent” is still useful for understanding how the Communist Party is quite successful in maintaining power not through domination or coercion but instead through certain levels of consent. I complement a Gramscian approach with writings from Lefebvre to provide the most robust theoretical approach.

Gramsci provides a particularly useful way to understand class formation in a functional sense, which is a perspective on class that reflects not only economic situation, but also cultural aspects of class. In contemporary China, culture is crucial to class formation. Gramsci understands culture as a form of hegemony, a type of power that is realized through consent and “common sense” as organized by civil society. Hegemony is distinct from domination. For Gramsci, hegemony is to consent through civil society as domination is to coercion through political society. Consent and coercion thus *cannot be divided* as the two notions of power work together to allow ruling groups to maintain influence and control. In this sub-section, however, I limit my explanation to Gramsci’s understanding of consent, cultural hegemony, and civil society because that is most relevant to my topic.

Cultural hegemony

Traditionally, culture in Marxist terms was *not* an element of the material, but rather an element of the ideological superstructure. In this way, culture was conventionally treated as a subset of the economic base. Gramsci, however, recognized that culture is not simply the expression of underlying economic relations and advocated for the integration of the cultural and economic spheres, for integrating base and superstructure as a circuit in a dialectical and reflexive relationship. This integrative circuitry relationship of economics (i.e. the material) and

culture (i.e. the symbolic) is the foundation of cultural materialism (Williams 1976; Williams 1977).

Gramsci used culture to understand how ruling groups win and maintain power. Gramsci defines hegemony as an unending process of moral and intellectual leadership that takes on cultural, political, economic, material, and legal forms. Hegemony is *not* a static top-down conception of power as domination, but rather hegemony is an ongoing negotiation between the rulers and the ruled. The Gramscian term “hegemony” acknowledges the active role of subordinate people in the operation of power. In other words, people are not just fools of the ruling class, but rather actively participate in granting their consent to be ruled by those in power. As explained by Jones (2007), a ruling power “must be sufficiently flexible to respond to new circumstances and to the changing wishes of those it rules. It must be able to reach into the minds and lives of its subordinates, exercising its power as what appears to be a free expression of their own interests and desires” (4). Gramsci (1971) sees hegemony as a form of common sense, a: ‘chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions’ that holds together ‘Stone Age elements,’ the principles of advanced science and ‘intuitions of a future philosophy’” (324). Every social group has various manifestations of common sense. Common sense is “continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life” (Gramsci 1971, 326). Common sense is one way through which the rulers grant consent from the ruled through cultural hegemony.

Civil society

Hegemony, consent, and common sense are organized through civil society. In some places, Gramsci (1971) writes that consent is a tool used by the state or ruling classes in the guise of civil society to gain or maintain power: “Between the economic structure and the State with its

legislation and its coercion stands civil society” (448). The state provides an important instrument in connecting civil society and the economy. In this sense, civil society organizes consent and constricts class struggle through its connection to the state (Burawoy 2003, 199). In other places, Gramsci (1971) more loosely defined civil society as “the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’” (12). Civil society thus blurs the distinction between public/private as political authority and individual decision-making: “Yet it is precisely in this private realm that ruling values seem most natural and therefore unchangeable” (Jones 2007, 32). Civil society is therefore not only regulated cultural institutions, such as church and school, but also individual behavior, tastes, and values. Civil society is particularly important for this study of everyday life in contemporary urban China, where class formations are made obvious through conspicuous consumption, especially the production and consumption of housing, which displays material forms of taste. I pay particularly close attention to the ways that certain cultural practices (e.g., behavior and manners) indicate and reinforce class divisions (Watkins 1993).

I draw on Gramsci to understand class formation in urban China. Drawing on L. Zhang (2010), I understand that there are two fundamentally intertwined aspects of class in China: 1) social and cultural positioning (i.e. cultural differences displayed in tastes and lifestyles), and 2) capital accumulation (i.e. fundamental socioeconomic inequality). I use landscape and class to understand the relationship between the cultural and economic spheres as detailed by the theoretical approach of cultural materialism. My cultural materialist approach further integrates the cultural and the economic spheres by drawing on Lefebvre’s conception of the mutually constitutive relationship between spatial production and social existence.

B. Class Formation in Economic and Cultural Domains

I define class as an activity or practice rather than as a category. I am inspired by Gramsci to merge the economic and cultural spheres in the analysis of class-making. T. Li (2007) discusses the usefulness of the Gramscian approach to understanding social history. She asserts that Gramsci is useful for taking into account the multiple positions that people occupy and the diverse power they wield:

Gramsci is...interested both in studying...conjunctures at which social groups come to see themselves as collectivities, develop critical insight, and mobilize to confront their adversaries [or not]...[Gramsci] understood that the actual social groups engaged in situated struggles are far more diverse as reflections of their fragmentary experiences, attachments, and embedded cultural ideas. (T. Li 2007, 22)

In other words, Gramsci allows for the specific, situated, and embodied, which is particularly useful in forming an understanding of class as a dynamic, heterogeneous, and functional group of cultural and economic life (Willis 1977). As Jessop (2005) points out, one important aspect of Gramscian class formation is the way in which social relations are inherently spatial and temporal, especially regarding the uneven development and internal colonialism of Italy. For Gramsci, the spatial implications for building different types of hegemony and rootedness of social classes were key to illuminating “the relative dominance of different scales of economic, political, intellectual and moral life” (Jessop 2005, 427). Gramsci’s spatial and scalar understanding cultural hegemony is especially useful when discussing the deeply embedded social divisions between urban and rural China. When people strongly identify with a certain place and then experience new forms of interaction, the result is stronger class divisions. Understanding place-based identity in this way is especially relevant to China when looking at the divisions between rural and urban in the wake of rising rates of migration (B. Goodman 1995).

Thompson's (1966) account of how the English working class maintained an active role in class construction as situated in a particular political, economic, and historical context: "[Class is not] 'structure,' nor even... 'category,' but as something which in fact happens...in human relationships" (9). In Thompson's view, the English working class identity was not an identity placed on them by the ruling classes. Many recent studies explore the making of class in contemporary China. These studies examine how ideas about class revolve around economic modes of production *and* cultural ideals of difference and hierarchy to show the valuable use of cultural materialism in the Chinese context (Anagnost 2008; D. Goodman 2008; Hanser 2008; W. Sun 2009a). It is important to note the complexity of the category of "class" in China, which is illustrated in the following quote from H. Ren's (2013) study on the middle class in China: "The productivity of class lies in its multiple uses in delineating the boundaries between the legible and the legitimate, between the permissible and the prohibited, between the recognizable and unrecognizable self-responsible subjects, and between the winners and the losers" (144). This thesis serves as a case study to demonstrate that these approaches are extremely valuable in the Chinese context, as class formation in contemporary urban China is a highly contested, dynamic, and cultural formation communicated through values, taste, and behavior.

Suzhi is an important aspect of class-making in China (Anagnost 2004). The Chinese word *suzhi* has multiple definitions in English as the concept does not fully exist in the English language. The numerous English translations of the word include quality, character, essence, qualification, disposition, and constitution. In this paper, I will sometimes use the terms "inner-quality" or "quality" for *suzhi*, which is typically defined by Chinese people as a measurement of one's personal quality, morality, civilized behavior, and level of education. Even though none of my interview questions explicitly asked about *suzhi*, the term was brought up at least once in

each interview. After *suzhi* was brought up unprompted by my interviewees, I usually asked them to give me some examples of low and high *suzhi*. My research participants described low *suzhi* as anything from jaywalking, spitting, talking loudly, cursing, failing to form a line, poor hygiene, and wearing pajamas in public. Low *suzhi* behaviors are commonly associated with migrant workers in the popular imagination, though locals engaging in these habits are still described as “uncivilized” or low quality too. High *suzhi* was described in certain practices such as following the traffic signals, speaking standard Mandarin, or being polite, such as giving up your seat on the bus for an elderly person. High *suzhi* was also described as having “high” culture, such as ballet or piano lessons, as well as experience going or studying abroad.

Literature on *suzhi* has proliferated in recent years. China scholars employing the governmentality analytic suggest that former Chinese President Hu Jintao developed a state discourse of “social harmony” to propagate a new and less-expensive version of political governance in China: the cultivation of high quality (*suzhi*) citizens that could govern themselves (Tomba 2004; Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005; Jacka 2009; Sigley 2009; W. Sun 2009b; Woronov 2009). Others have examined how *suzhi* has been used as a part of the development discourse to justify civilizing the “untamed” countryside and benefit the migrant workers’ social cultivation and economic opportunities (Yan 2003, 2008). According to Greenhalgh (2010) China has embarked on a “quality project” aimed at creating citizens able to compete in a globally integrated society. Indeed, the discourse of *suzhi* is perpetuated through state institutions that justify social stratification (Bach 2010; Y. Guo 2013; Tang and Tomba 2013), and as popular notions of segregation seen in societal attitudes (Huang 2006; Shin 2012).

While *suzhi* is difficult to define, it is a general measurement of one's level of education and social status, and often refers to certain "uncivilized" behaviors, such as talking too loud.

One research participant gave a useful definition of *suzhi* during an interview:

It's hard to define *suzhi* because it's really just a feeling. For me the word to describe it would be comfortable- how comfortable you feel with someone and how comfortable they make you feel. It's also about how well you feel you would get along with someone. You also want to consider politeness, how often they swear or use bad words, a loud voice, and dialect, like my husband for example. That's really bad behavior for kids to be around. For example, some people are just casually walking down the street in their pajamas, that's really inappropriate. *Suzhi* is really a holistic thing. (Zhu Chongyang, 40-year-old female, low-income Old Nanjing resident).

The standards and measurements of *suzhi* defined as such indicate that standards of civilized residents are based at least in part on behavior. Indeed, Zhu Chongyang's definition of *suzhi* in the previous paragraph resonates with Hanser's (2008) description of class in China: "Following Bourdieu, I argue that social interactions involve an acting out...of our culturally coded habits and preferences. We rely on our *habitus* to tell us what feels right in a given situation and how we should behave" (8). As further explored in chapter 4, class in China is thus based on a person's civilized behavior as defined by the social norms and mannerisms of many upper-class urban residents (Anagnost 2008).

C. Landscape and Class Formation

Landscape is one way I choose to investigate the cultural materialism of class in China as the landscape serves as the site of class-making (Cosgrove 1984). Landscape is defined here as the representations *and* practices of materialized power relations: "landscapes...[are] physical concretizations of power" (Mitchell 2000, 125). The landscape understood in this way serves as the site of the making of class (Cosgrove 1984; Mitchell 1996). As Zukin (1993) articulates it, landscape is "the architecture of social class, gender and race relations imposed by powerful institutions" (16). She emphasizes that landscape is a dynamic social relation, subject to

continuously changing social and economic struggles. Landscape is a point of view and changes according to its reader, a definition that draws inspiration from Gramsci (Jones 2007). Landscape is therefore a material object in which different narratives, representations, and practices coexist.

I interrogate and examine the cultural landscape through observations and interviews that express narratives that value and devalue the landscape in different ways. Mitchell's (1996) work on landscape helps to illuminate the ways the landscape of Old Nanjing embodies the inequalities of the capitalist economy while also further reinforces lower class identity and social reproduction. The changing landscape of China is a manifestation of the way that the Chinese have transformed their way of seeing the world through the lens of property relations (Cosgrove 1984; Pow 2007).

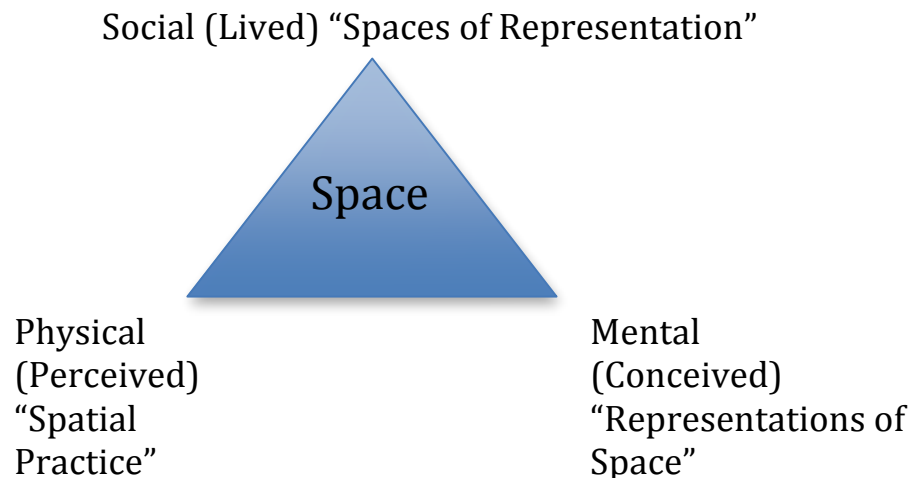
I study how the landscape of poverty produces and reproduces stereotypes of the residents of Old Nanjing as "uncivilized" and "backward." This process of creating a landscape of "backwardness" constitutes certain lower class identities:

the landscape itself is an active agent in constituting that history, serving both as a symbol for the needs and desires of the people who live in it...and as a solid, dead weight... 'Landscape' is best seen as both *a work* (it is the product of human labor and thus encapsulates the dreams, desires, and all the injustices of the people and social systems that make it) and as something that *does work* (it acts as a social agent in the further development of a place). (Mitchell 2000, 94, emphasis in original)

The landscape of Old Nanjing embodies the inequalities of the capitalist economy while also reinforcing lower class identity and social reproduction (Zukin 1993; Mitchell 1996). The changing landscape of China is a manifestation of the way that the Chinese have transformed their way of seeing the world since economic reform through the lens of property relations (Pow 2007). I interrogate and examine the cultural landscape through narratives that value and devalue the landscape in different ways (see chapter 5). In short, Gramsci provides the foundation for a cultural materialist understanding of class formation in China.

II. Lefebvre: The Spatial Triad and the Production of Space

Lefebvre is particularly useful to this case study because of his close attention to the role of the state, as well as his focus on individual re-articulations, resistance, and embodiments of state power in everyday practice (Elden 2004; Brenner and Elden 2009). Lefebvre is particularly complementary to Gramsci because he also emphasizes the dialectical relationship between the cultural and economic, and the material and symbolic (Stanek 2011). For Lefebvre, space (i.e. mental, physical, and social space) is the crucial component to analyzing the relation between the material and symbolic. The trialectical relationship of space that concerns Lefebvre is the triad between physical space (spatial practice, or “the perceived,” e.g. roads and gates), mental space (representations of space, or “the conceived,” e.g. maps), and social space (representational spaces, or “the lived,” e.g. the military, nation-state, or nature) (see Lefebvre 1991; Elden 2004). Although Lefebvre uses these various terms for the spatial triad interchangeably, I will primarily refer to the triad as physical, mental, and social space(s) for the purposes of simplification.



A. Bridging Idealism and Materialism

Lefebvre argues for an approach to social space that bridges Hegelian idealism and Marxist materialism. Lefebvre challenges and extends Marxist theory to advocate for an

incorporation of the materialist (i.e. economic modes of production) and idealist (i.e. discursive, linguistic, and ideological) spheres in order to understand the mutually reciprocal relationship between base and superstructure. He asserts that the split between the practical and symbolic is a socially constructed division of academic labor (Lefebvre 1991, 141). Lefebvre (1991) criticizes semiology for reducing political and social space to simply the “mental space” of ideology and discourse (6-7). Lefebvre (1991) argues that the built environment (i.e. “physical space”) and its symbolic forms (i.e. “mental space”) must be analyzed *together* in a mutually constitutive relationship, which he calls social space (131). Lefebvre writes of the production of space as an economic and social process:

It would be more accurate to say that it [space] is at once a precondition and a result of social superstructures...Is space a social relationship? Certainly—but one which is inherent to property relationships (especially the ownership of the earth, of land) and also closely bound up with the forces of production (which impose a form on that earth or land); here we see the polyvalence of social space, its ‘reality’ at once formal and material. (1991, 85)

Lefebvre helps me understand how in post-reform China transforming notions of private property relations are changing social space in the city (see chapter 6). For Lefebvre, the interrelationship between physical, mental, and social space illustrates that both the material and symbolic are equally important in the epistemology of space as a social construct (Lefebvre 1991, 117). As Stanek (2011) writes: “what relates the spaces differentiated by gender, age, class, memory, and desire to one another? This is the political stake of Lefebvre’s unitary theory of space, which is today more relevant than ever before: to think of space as a whole means to keep it open to everybody” (137). The production of space is hence defined as both the physical construction of buildings, as well as the social construction of meaning imbued in space. Lefebvre’s theories on space illustrate experiments in oscillation between materialism and

idealism, and it is these tools that are used in an iterative process and dialectical tension with empirical evidence collected in contemporary urban China.

Lefebvre (1991) insists that space is never a static or neutral container, but always socially constructed and grounded in a network of dynamic social practices: “The qualities in question are qualities *of space*, not...qualities embedded *in space*” (230, emphasis in original). One of Lefebvre’s main contributions to social theory is his argument that space neither serves as a neutral container in which social processes are assembled, nor provides an insignificant stage where life is played out. Rather space is a socially produced node in a dynamic system. Only through certain social processes (e.g., functionalist urban planning) does space lose its social character and become completely abstract. It is through his research in France on post-World War II construction that he witnesses the scientific authority of functionalist urban planning that *attempts* to divide the city into commodified, isolated, and functionalist pieces that treat space as mere container (Stanek 2011). Lefebvre calls this type of space “abstract space” to describe alienated and homogenous space produced for the purpose of extracting surplus exchange-value. This is a particularly appropriate theoretical framework to use when examining China because the proliferation of urban planning academic discourse and government support of functionalism ignores the social aspects of space and only sees space as exchange value (Abramson 2008).

B. The Production of Space

Lefebvre’s theories of the trialectic between mental, physical, and social space emphasizes the creation of new social groups through the production of space—not only the physical construction of a socio-spatial segregation, but also in the ways in which the state, businesses, and people imbue spaces with meaning. For example, a homeless person is never welcome in a boutique mall or fancy restaurant, but may or may not be welcome in a public park

(thus the social construction of “homelessness” or “homeless people” is mutually constituted through presence in and association with public parks). Lefebvre’s revolutionary approach to the economic production of space as a site of conditioning social relations integrated the cultural and economic spheres, and demonstrated that there is a constitutive relationship between spatial production and social existence.⁶ Lefebvre (1991) writes:

Though a *product* to be used, to be consumed, it [space] is also a *means of production*; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it. Thus this means of production, produced as such, cannot be separated either from the productive forces, including technology and knowledge, or from the social division of labor which shapes it, or from the state and the superstructures of society. (85, emphasis in original)

In other words, the everyday practices of the people who inhabit space and bestow it with meaning contributes to the production of social space.

Lefebvre’s elaboration of a mutually constitutive relationship between spatial production (e.g., construction of buildings and meanings in a space) and social formation (e.g., creation of new social classes based on housing inequality) is very helpful in my thesis. Nowhere is this phenomenon more true than in China, where capital accumulation in the built environment accounts for most of the national GDP and provides political legitimacy for local governments (Hsing 2010). For example, L. Zhang (2010) builds on Lefebvre to develop the analytic of the “spatialization of class” that integrates culture and economy:

the production of commodity housing (as it is known in China), gated communities, and private living provides the physical and social ground on which the making of the new middle classes becomes possible...Emerging places offer a tangible location of a new class to materialize itself through spatial exclusion, cultural differentiation, and lifestyle practices. The new spatial and social formation has also compelled novel modes of governing that are distinctly different from those of the socialist era. (3-4)

⁶ In using the term “social existence,” Lefebvre refers to class-consciousness and class formation as explained by Marx (1859) in the following quote: “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.”

The formation of the middle-class in China is thus established through private property relations and the spatial production of gated communities.

Lefebvre (1991) also traces the history of a movement from absolute space to abstract space to illustrate the differences between spatial production as domination and appropriation (164). He postulates that the appropriation of space results in something called “absolute space,” which embodies use value (as opposed to “abstract space” that embodies exchange value). Absolute space embodies community and *works of creation* (as opposed to “things of production”) that harmonize with the body and emerge out of the needs of everyday life (Lefebvre 1991, 71).⁷ The domination of space, on the other hand, results in something called “abstract space.” This kind of space is manifested in *things of production* that can be bought and sold on the market for the purposes of perpetuating state power and the reproduction of capital. Abstract space is *rendered* homogeneous but creates differentiation and in this way obscures itself as a part of capitalist domination. The domination of land by the state and capital, such as through the expertise of city planners, demonstrate an inherent violence in the production of abstract space (Lefebvre 1991, 387). The role of the state in the domination of space and production of abstract space is key to understanding the influence of local governments in the urban Chinese land market.

C. Lefebvre and State Space

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) demonstrates that the widespread and overarching structure of capitalism as partnered with the state is a system of material and discursive relationships that produces and reproduces abstract space that is seemingly homogenous, but actually highly differentiated based on spatio-temporal differences across scale.

⁷ Social practice *creates works* when labor plays a secondary role, but *produces things* when labor plays a primary role.

The aim of the state in producing space is to make space appear homogenous (Lefebvre 2003b, 227). Capitalism creates pressure to homogenize and innovate at the same time because people seek difference in a society based on mass production (Harvey 1990). In one of Lefebvre's (2003b) essays, "Space and the State," explained below, he discusses the role of the state and the individual in producing social space.

Lefebvre understands space, the state, and state space as concrete abstractions. In examining space and the state as concrete abstractions, Lefebvre examines them in the following way: "space as a dynamic relationship among its bodily experience, symbolic meaning, social organizations, and scientific representations" (Stanek 2011, 140). One of my goals in this thesis is to emulate this approach by examining the dynamic relationships between the body, symbols, social norms, and discourses as witnessed on the ground in urban China.

Concrete abstractions are ideas that emerge from social practice. In other words, a concrete abstraction is the connection between social practices and conceptual experiences. Only by understanding space as a concrete abstraction, Lefebvre argues, can social reality begin to be examined and understood. Studying Lefebvrian space as a concrete abstraction merges the universal and specific, and connects social practices to conceptual experiences. The state too, like space, is a concrete abstraction because the state manifests itself as a reification through the mental space of nationalist ideology. For Lefebvre (2003b), the state *is* social space because various social institutions combine to form the political monumentality of the state itself.

The process of state control and coordination of capital exchange through the space of state territory is what Lefebvre calls the "state mode of production," or SMP. Lefebvre (2003b) defines the mechanism of SMP as the state's "control of flows and stocks by ensuring their coordination [and exchange]" through political space (226). For example, I illustrate in the

following chapters how state intervention in the land market engages with capitalist modes of production, which produce high-rise apartment buildings geared toward private homeownership. For Lefebvre (2003b), state control over territorial and institutional space is the key to maintaining and reproducing the social relations that underpin state power and the exchange of capital (241). In other words, the state not only is key to the production and reproduction of social space, each state itself *is* a type of social space (225). That is to say, the state is not an isolated “thing,” but rather a system of networks (241).

Lefebvre (2003b) argues that the SMP is distinct from the capitalist mode of production because it involves the politicization of space through national identity: “in the course of a three fold process [growth, urbanization, and spatialization]...a qualitative leap occurs: the emergence of ...SMP” (226). Lefebvre (2003b) calls this development of statism the “rationalization and socialization of society” through the naturalization of state territory and social and political space (226). State intervention in the market is constant and necessary for the management and production of space: “through its control, the State tends to accentuate the homogenous character of space, which is fractured by exchange” (Lefebvre 2003b, 234). We witness this with the proliferation of large scale construction projects in urban China.

My aim is to illustrate the connection between the state and everyday practice. Therefore, Lefebvre provides an especially productive theoretical approach to my case study because he pays particular attention to the role of *both* the state and individuals in appropriating and dominating space for their own interests (Elden 2004). For example, in his theorization of state space, Lefebvre (2003b) writes: “This space [of the SMP] implies not only that everyday life is programmed and idealized through manipulated consumption but also that spatiality is hierarchized to distinguish noble spaces from vulgar ones, residential spaces from other spaces”

(235). My study of civilized and uncivilized landscapes in chapter 5 speaks to the ways in which representations by the state and people produce and reproduce hierarchized spaces. To understand the ways that the individual body disrupts abstract space, however, one first must understand the ways that the state is socially constructed in space.

The state mode of production: Fragment under private property and unify under national identity

Lefebvre (2003b) maintains that the state's role in the production of space is to manage the various fragmentations of space. He writes that the homogenized and fragmented spaces of capitalist modernity are produced not only through capitalist strategies, but also through the regulatory strategies of the state. The space of the state is one of control and exchange. The state provides the institutional and territorial basis of managing the crises of capital. Lefebvre (2003b) writes: "[t]he relation between 'private' interests and the activities of 'public' powers sometimes involves a collusion, sometimes a collision. This creates the paradox of a space that is both homogenous and broken" (227). The process of homogenization and fragmentation that Lefebvre describes reflects the way that the Chinese state is shaping public space and managing the commodification of land. It is through Lefebvre's clarification of the SMP that illustrates the way in which the state and the market cannot be divorced into separate dichotomous spheres, as some China scholars have been known to do (for a critique of the state-market dichotomy used in China scholarship, see Lin and A. Zhang 2014).

Commodity exchange and the extraction of surplus value are controlled by the state to maintain social stability and aid in the production of social space. Indeed, Lefebvre (2003b) writes that the state is the "guiding hand" in the production of space (227). In this way, socialism and capitalism in China are mutually constitutive. For the Chinese, the market is viewed as a

powerful engine of growth and wealth, but at the same time it is “so powerful” that the state always “must” protect people from it and regulate it.

While the state and its capitalist interests protect private property and produce abstract space for the purposes of extracting exchange value, the state simultaneously fragments space into different functionalities (Brenner and Elden 2009). As Lefebvre writes: “knowledge that is directly invested in the production of space can process it in vast expanses (highway construction); but this space is fragmented, pulverized by private property” (235). One of the ways this is most clearly illustrated in the Chinese case is the way in which changing notions of private homeownership have transformed understandings of the state/market relationship and role in Chinese society (see chapter 6).

The tension between homogenous and differentiated space is also exemplified in the state’s efforts to create various functional regions of the city (consumption, leisure, production, tourism, etc), what Lefebvre (2003b) calls a hierarchized “collection of ghettos” (244). The SMP engages in an effort to create a unified entity of social space through the nation, maintain a coherent national identity and cohesion, and significantly, “imposes *the reproduction of the relations of domination*” (Lefebvre 2003b, 244, emphasis in original). However, the state must unify these separate spaces by establishing a national identity to maintain the relations of domination and prevent collapse (Elden 2004).

The individual body in abstract state space

The amalgamation of Lefebvre’s (1991, 1996, 2003b) works together maintains that there is a constant dialectical tension between appropriation and domination. While Lefebvre acknowledges the homogenous and consistent historical and material system that produces abstract space under capitalism, he also understands the individual variances across space and

time based on culture and ideology through the appropriation of space by individuals. He does not try to construct a narrative of domination and power emanating in a top-down structure from the state, but rather insists that power relations are a dynamic and contested process materialized in the appropriation and domination of space by both the state and the individual.

For Lefebvre, the individual and nuanced rearticulations of the “disobedient” body through social space are primary ways that the individual disrupts abstract space. Lefebvre (2003b) emphasizes that social space as a merging of the material and symbolic is the lived experience of the body is inherently differential and opposed to homogeneity: “The understanding of space [as the spatial triad]...must begin with the lived and the body, that is, from a space occupied by an organic, living, and thinking being” (229). Lefebvre is primarily interested in the appropriation of space in everyday life, how people are resisting (often within the constraints of state space), and how they are resisting state power by appropriating their own space for themselves (Lefebvre 1996). For example, the illegal activities of prostitution and selling pornography in Old Nanjing or migrant workers selling street food without a license illustrates the everyday resistance of the residents by occupying space to support their own livelihoods. The state thus attempts but cannot succeed in producing a fully realized abstract space. This analytic is thus used throughout the thesis to understand the results of and pushback against state discourse through the production of space.

Urban modernity

Lefebvre’s (2003a) aim in the *Urban Revolution* is to trace the history of urban modernity (see chapter 5 for more discussion on urban modernity). His main argument is that urbanization has overtaken industrialization as the key determinant in the formation of social relations. His work records the witnessing of new social relations comprising what he calls “urban society,” as

opposed to “industrial society.” In other words, class relations in the city are now based on struggles over urban space instead of struggles over ownership of the modes of production. Lefebvre (2003a) postulates that there is a key moment of transformation when urban society takes over industrial society. This moment is when the urban is no longer viewed as a distinct entity of the rural, but rather the rural becomes essential for the existence of the urban. All of this is predicated on the fundamental notion that social space as a social construct is comprised of the struggle between capital, labor and land.

In thinking about structure and power, Lefebvre brings new insight into our understanding of discourse and materialism. Lefebvre stresses the importance of discourse through semiotic and symbolic analysis of the signs of the built and social environments of the city. At the same time, he stresses the importance of materialism by emphasizing the importance of investment in the built environment as reinforcing capitalist modes of production. In analyzing the historical development of the urban environment, Lefebvre sees social relations and everyday practices changing under the new epistemological and ontological conditions of urban modernity.

III. Conclusion

Gramsci and Lefebvre complement each other as theorists writing out of the Marxist tradition of political-economy. While Gramsci helps illuminate the use of cultural materialism in understanding class formation through the landscape in China, Lefebvre unpacks the importance of the spatial triad in spatial production and social formation. Both theorists pay special attention to linking the material and symbolic, the intersection at which Williams (1976) defines as “culture.” Despite the fact that they are both writing in different places (Lefebvre in post WWII France and Gramsci in post WWI Italy) they both provide broader theories of culture and the

state, which can be interrogated in other contexts. In China, there are many similarities and differences between the Western contexts that concern Lefebvre and Gramsci. However, my goal is to use their theories as a trampoline rather than a box to expand my own understandings and interpretations of urban China, not as an objective understanding of the world, but rather as a window to a larger debate on state, society, and space.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEXT OF NANJING AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the historical and geographical context of the city of Nanjing and the five field sites I lived in over the course of 14 months of fieldwork from 2011-2013. I explain the historical and political context for the highly variegated urban landscape of the city. In this thesis I take a descriptive approach to understanding the spatial patterns of urban development and socioeconomic divisions in the city. Therefore an appreciation of Nanjing's history of state-driven city planning, uneven development, and the urban-rural divide establish a foundation for understanding the rest of the thesis. I also outline the implications of the free-market economic reforms since 1978 for the spatial concentration of urban poverty and housing inequality in Nanjing. I describe the contemporary urban landscape as highly variegated and dynamic.

This chapter will outline the uneven development of Nanjing that can be explained by numerous factors, including: 1) its history as the national capital and symbol of modernity; 2) the commodification of land and consolidation of local state power during the economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s; and 3) contemporary demolition and development projects that reinforce patterns of socio-spatial segregation. After first giving a general overview of Nanjing's geographical location and economic status, this chapter explains the history of Nanjing; contemporary patterns of poverty, demolition, and segregation; methodology; and conclusion.

I. Geographical, Historical, and Economic Context of Nanjing

A brief description of Nanjing's demographics and economic activity provides background on the city's overall position in China's economic development trajectory. Nanjing is the capital of Jiangsu province (see figure 4), a province that held a total population of 79 million in 2012 (urban: 40 million; rural: 39 million). The majority Han ethnic group makes up 97% of the total provincial population. Jiangsu Province is one of the wealthiest provinces in China and it serves the area as a focal point and economic center of the Yangtze River Delta. According to China's 2012 National Bureau of Statistics data, Jiangsu's nominal GDP in 2012 was 5.41 trillion RMB (US\$892 billion), making it the second largest nominal GDP of all Chinese provinces that year. Jiangsu's per capita GDP in 2012 was 68,347 RMB (US\$10,827), ranking the province as the fourth highest in China in terms of GDP per capita (<http://www.stats.gov.cn>, accessed February 18, 2014).



Figure 4: Map of China: Nanjing is the capital of Jiangsu Province, a coastal province of China as highlighted in red. Jiangsu is one of the wealthiest provinces in China and usually ranks as the first or second province in the country for highest nominal GDP. *Source:* Uwe Dederich (2010)

Although the economic indicators of Jiangsu province are some of the highest in the country, the province exhibits highly uneven development. The province is characterized by extreme uneven development between the urban and prosperous south (Sunan) and the rural and

impoverished north (Subei). Wei and Fan (2000) used Jiangsu as their case study in researching regional inequality in China to illustrate the spatial ramifications of economic reform. I include their maps of uneven development in Jiangsu here (see figure 5). The wealth gap and unequal economic growth of Jiangsu is also exemplified in the fact that most of the cities of Jiangsu province have a GDP per capita around 1.5 times the provincial average. For example, Nanjing's GDP per capita in 2013 was 98,000 RMB (US\$16,000) (<http://www.stats.gov.cn>, accessed February 18, 2014). Under the current regime, China's political-economic structure operates on a remarkably hierarchal arrangement based on multi-scalar distributions of state power and investment preference (Ma 2005). Development priority is thus given first to cities over rural townships, to coastal cities over inland cities, and to first-tier cities (e.g., Beijing and Shanghai) over second-tier cities (e.g., Nanjing and Chengdu) resulting in uneven development on the national and regional scale (Wei and Ma 1996; Wei 2000)

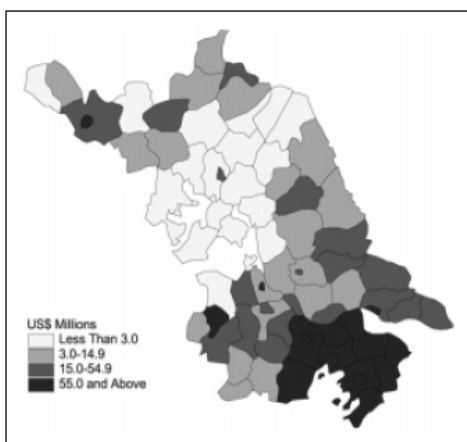


Figure 2: *Regional distribution of foreign direct investment in Jiangsu, 1995.*

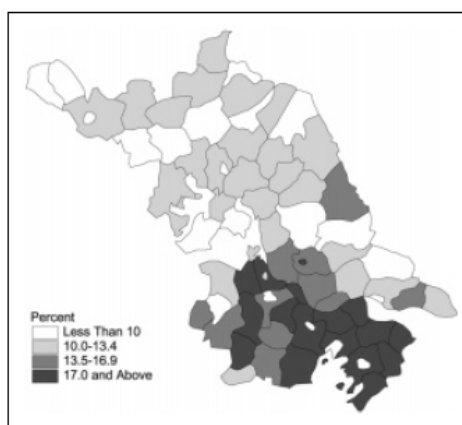


Figure 6: *Average annual growth rates of gross value of industrial and agricultural output per capita (GVIAOP), 1978-1995.*

Figure 5: Maps of the uneven development of Jiangsu Province. *Source:* Wei, Dennis and Cindy Fan. 2000. "Regional Inequality in China: A Case Study of Jiangsu Province." *Professional Geographer* 52, no. 3: 462-64.

Nanjing (sometimes spelled “Nanking”) boasts a population of over 8 million, and is located in southern Jiangsu about 150 miles (240 km) west of Shanghai (see figure 6). The city is accessible to Shanghai in 90 minutes by high-speed train. Nanjing was the capital of China during 10 dynasties, most recently as the imperial capital during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). During the Republican Era (1912-1949), Nanjing again served as the national capital when China was ruled by the Guomindang (GMD), the Chinese Nationalist Party, under Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek.⁸

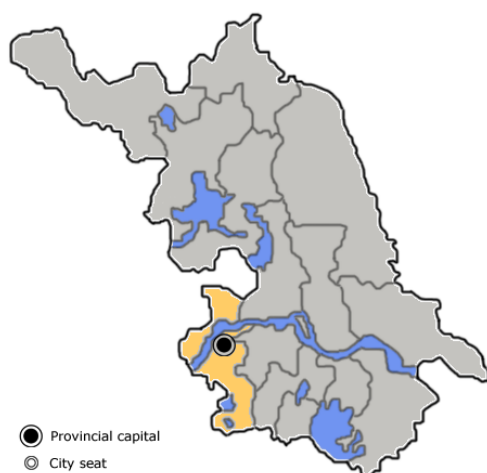


Figure 6: The location of Nanjing within Jiangsu Province. The yellow area indicates the “Greater Nanjing Metropolitan Region.” *Source:* www.nanjing.gov.cn, accessed April 30, 2014.

Despite the meager academic literature on the city, Nanjing is a particularly important city and ideal research location for a project on urban transformations. Nanjing creates an interesting case study because of the inherent tensions manifested in the city as a historical national capital and industrial center that recently became highly linked to the global economy (F. Wu 2007c). Nanjing exhibits many characteristics of industrial cities due to its legacy as an

⁸ Guomindang is also sometimes written as Kuomintang (KMT). I use the standardized pinyin version of Guomindang in this thesis. During the Republican Era under the rule of the GMD, the Chinese fought the Japanese in World War II. Because Nanjing was the national capital during that time, it was the site of much violence. Nanjing is often known for the “Rape of Nanking,” a massacre in 1937 led by Japanese troops to take over the capital city during World War II. During the tragedy, 300,000 civilians were killed and 20,000 women were raped in a period of six weeks.

important industrial center during the Maoist era (1949-1976). The city is currently restructuring its economy to attract private and foreign investment in efforts to follow the same trajectory as larger cities on the east coast. Nanjing's urban development and economic growth remains highly uneven, however, as is obvious in the spatial concentration of impoverished districts that remain socially and economically segregated today (see figure 7 for a map of the spatial concentration of poverty of Nanjing). This is similar to the social and economic segregation seen in other large cities in eastern China as evidenced in studies conducted on urban poverty and segregation in Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing (Hu and Kaplan 2001; F. Wu 2004; Z. Li and F. Wu 2008; F. Wu, He, and Webster 2010; Chung and Zhou 2011; G. Chen 2012a).

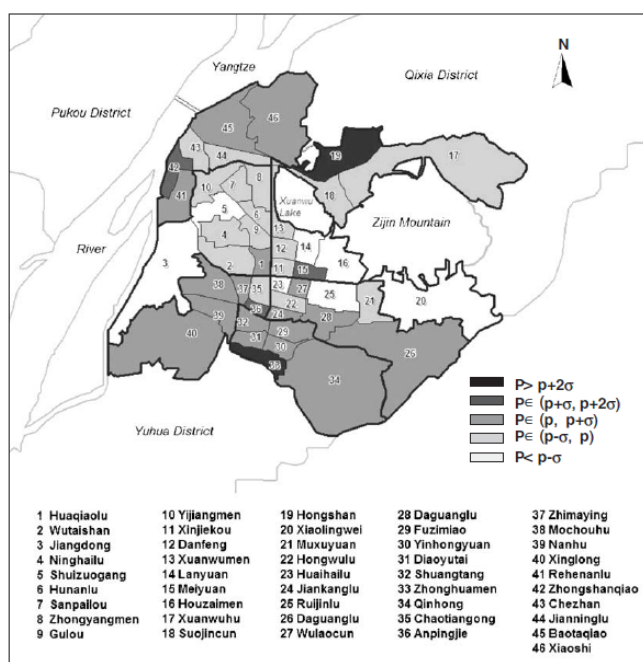


Fig. 3. The distribution of urban poverty in the urban communities (Street-Office areas) of Nanjing, measured by the percentage of the recipients of MLSP, 2000 (p stands for mean, and σ for standard deviation).

Figure 7: This map depicts the spatial concentration of urban poverty in Nanjing based on the recipients of Minimum Living Standard Program, which provides a living wage of 220 RMB (US\$25) a month to residents without income. Old Nanjing is located in the district labeled 33 (Zhonghuamen), which is the southern district containing one of the highest level of poverty in the city. *Source*: Chen, Guo, Chaolin Gu, and Fulong Wu. 2006. "Urban poverty in the transitional economy: a case of Nanjing, China." *Habitat International* 30 (1): 11.

Nanjing's urban landscape is diversified due to its history as a national capital and center of industry during the Mao era (F. Wu 2007c). As a result of recent private capital investment, Nanjing's skyline is a highly urbanized and modernized provincial capital (see figure 8). The city combines its image of modernity with historically important monuments, such as Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum, the tombs of the Ming Dynasty, an ancient city wall, and the Presidential Palace. G. Chen (2012b) has conducted numerous case studies and fieldwork projects in Nanjing and writes: "Compared with other Chinese cities, Nanjing's unique history has resulted in a highly visible landscape that contrasts post-reform achievements with pre-reform fixtures, pre-revolution landmarks, and historical footprints" (253). On the street level, its variegated landscape of housing inequality is dotted with culturally significant dilapidated old town neighborhoods amidst posh shopping malls, ritzy apartment complexes, and high-security gated communities (see figures 9 and 10 for photos of the variegated urban landscape). Against the backdrop of spatial patterns of uneven development, Nanjing's history as a national capital and the post-Mao economic reforms provide the historical context for the contemporary phenomena of housing inequality and socio-spatial segregation.



Figure 8: The Nanjing City Skyline: An image of the highly urbanized and modernized Nanjing skyline. *Source:* www.nanjing.gov.cn, accessed April 30, 2014.



Figure 9: Old Nanjing, one of the author's five field sites, is located next to the ancient Nanjing city wall. Old Nanjing is a typical dilapidated old city neighborhood that interrupts the urban landscape of skyscrapers and high-rise apartment complexes with its distinctive red-roofed one-story homes. *Source:* Photo by author, July 2013.



Figure 10: The Old Nanjing skyline as an old city neighborhood peppering the urban landscape of high-rises with traditional Chinese architecture. *Source:* Photo by author, July 2013.

A. History of Nanjing

This section details Nanjing's legacy as the historical capital of 10 imperial dynasties and the Chinese Nationalist Party from 1912-1949, which makes it a traditional center of state power

and national identity with a long history of socio-spatial segregation. Nanjing was favored during the Mao era as a center for industrial production, but is currently attempting to abandon its industrial past and integrate more closely with the global economy (F. Wu 2007c). Its economic and spatial patterns thus resemble a combination of a highly industrialized landscape similar to the central regions of China, while also maintaining features of the booming eastern coastal cities, such as the skyscrapers of Shanghai. In this section, I will establish historical context for present-day patterns of uneven development explained by 1) a legacy in Nanjing of state-driven city planning for the goals of modernity and national identity; 2) favoring certain districts as focal points of economic development; and 3) the urban-rural divide in China.

Modernity and nationalism through urban planning

I now turn to a discussion of some of the ways that modernity and nationality were manifested through the development of the built environment in Nanjing. The Chinese city is situated in a specific historical context of social and political loci for the development projects of modernity and national identity. There is a tradition in China of modeling the academic and professional urban planning of Western cities (Musgrove 2000), a material effect that can be seen in Chinese cities that attempt to emulate Western styles of skyscrapers, shopping malls, and wide, ordered boulevards (Abramson 2008). There is a historical legacy in Chinese cities of consolidating power, discipline, and order through city planning (Esherick 2000). This is compared and contrasted to Western urban planning inspired by Le Corbusier and modernist urban design, which have collaborated with real estate capital and state economic development goals (Boyer 1996). In the West, modernity was often manifested in rational planning during the twentieth century, which was later considered to be a complete failure (Jacobs 1961).

Though China has a extensive history of urban planning (Skinner 1977; Rowe 1984), in the Republican Era (1912-1949) both Chinese and foreigners saw Chinese cities as disorderly and in desperate need of fundamental reform. The reorganization of urban space was a fundamental part of the government's modernist agenda during the Republican Era. It was during this time that modernity became associated with cities and their built environments as manifested in Western models of orderly and efficient urban planning. Because Nanjing was the capital of China during this period, it became the experimental subject of Western-educated urban planners and government officials in realizing a vision of modernity and national identity embodied in the built environment (Esherick 2000).

In Asia where modernity and progress often have been defined and imposed by imperialism, the Chinese city thus exhibits tension between Western modernity and Chinese national identity. During the Republican Era, China's leaders sought to break from the classical imperial mold and build Nanjing as an entirely new city of "wide streets, open vistas, monumental public buildings...In all cases there was a particular concern to structure the capital [of Nanjing] to impress...foreign visitors" (Esherick 2000, 4). The architecture, however, remained distinctly Chinese. The tension between making a city modern and keeping it Chinese was manifested in a built environment that reflected efforts to strike a balance between achieving modernity and maintaining national identity through distinct architectural styles.

According to Musgrove (2000), the sections of Nanjing that were constructed during the Republican Era (1912-1949) served as a new center of state power and national identity. The Guomindang (GMD) leaders directed the city planning efforts and intended to model the city planning of Nanjing after Washington, DC and Paris. The GMD leaders wanted the city planners to combine modernity, efficiency, rationality, and order with "traditional" Chinese architectural

style. The GMD and their city planners used techniques that combined creative references to traditional Chinese aesthetics and style, while also utilizing the latest in international design techniques. Nanjing thus features clearly defined zones of functionality, based on the modern city planning ideas of Le Corbusier and Haussmann (see Abramson 2008).

History of uneven development

The urban development plans of the GMD government favored the northern part of the city as home to political elites, which is now known as Gulou and Xuanwu districts, still the two wealthiest districts within the city of Nanjing (refer to figure 6 above). Liu and F. Wu (2006a) show that the historical and contemporary efforts of state-led urban development in Nanjing has resulted in the spatial concentration of urban poverty in certain districts, especially old city neighborhoods and the urban fringe.⁹ As a result, during the Republican Era residential segregation in Nanjing was among the highest in China:

The history of urban development has left visible imprints on the current urban landscape of Nanjing in terms of land use pattern and pockets of low-standard housing...In 1949, there were over 0.2 million people living in 309 slums scattered over the southern part of the city, mainly along the railroad or near the city wall...The historical slums or pockets of low-standard housing in Nanjing had not been fully redeveloped until the early 1980s. (G. Chen, Gu, and F. Wu 2006, 20)

Beginning in the 1980s, economic reforms (e.g., privatization) allowed for the commodification of state-owned land to private real-estate developers, resulting in widespread demolition and displacement. However, the legacy of uneven development patterns during the Republican Era remain in the southern part of the city, where Old Nanjing is located, and it remains a highly impoverished area of the city (see figure 6, Old Nanjing is located in the 33 Zhonghuamen area).

B. The Urban-Rural Divide

⁹ For a more detailed history of the urban development and spatial concentration of poverty in Nanjing, see Liu and Wu 2006, pages 615-617.

In this thesis I also confront the topic of rural to urban migration and a discussion of the history of the rural/urban divide in Chinese history is crucial here. The role of cities in Chinese history is a hotly debated topic in the historical literature. Some authors insist on an urban-rural continuum during the late imperial era (1880-1912) where the urban and rural did not exhibit unique economic or cultural characteristics (Mote 1973; Skinner 1977). In other words, according to some scholars of late imperial China, a distinctive urban economic structure did not exist until capitalism was introduced by Western influences beginning in 1889. This scholarship has been widely criticized as an imperialistic and Eurocentric idea—that China was relatively “backward” and did not achieve “modernity” until it began to build cities based on Western models of capitalism in the late nineteenth century (see Rowe 1984).

Other historical scholarship proposes that China developed a distinct urban culture and capitalist economy even before the penetration of Western influence in 1889 (Rowe 1984). In a study of the history of urbanization in Nanjing, Fei (2009) notes that along with the agglomeration of people and resources in a small area, there is evidence of “significant alterations in the fabric of life” in cities, such as distinct cultural and consumption patterns (14-15). According to Fei (2009), the history of Nanjing involves the legacy of a unique urban culture and lifestyle, including literature, theatre, and fashion. The historical legacy of an urban-rural gulf that economically, socially, politically, and culturally divides China remains today.

It is also important to understand the history of urbanization and migration in terms of the historical importance of native-place identity. Regional ethnicities distinguish Chinese people in terms of major linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences (Honig 1992). Ethnicity in China must be understood *beyond* state-constructed categories of “nationality” (*minzu*) to include profound regional contrasts that are manifested in cultural and linguistic differences between migrant

workers and local residents of cities (L. Zhang 2001). For example, B. Goodman (1995) points out the importance of native-place identity and urban-rural migration in shaping Chinese urban society from 1853-1937. For her, the Chinese project of achieving modernization and building national identity during the Republican era marked a major change in the urban geographies of China:

modernization...does not presume the withering of traditional ties and practices. Instead...‘tradition’ was not fixed but dynamic, not given but constructed, and the means by which elements of ‘traditional’ Chinese culture helped facilitate and structure the process of radical social transformation we associate with modernity. (B. Goodman 1995, 46)

The Republican Era was a crucial time for the Chinese state as people began developing a broader national identity within regional and local identities. It is precisely in this process of the adoption of different nested identities that conceptions of modernity and tradition were forged and transformed (B. Goodman 1995). It is important to note that the social, cultural, and economic gulf between the urban and the rural remained throughout the Republican Era, as the city became a privileged site of both modernity and nationalism. The tension between tradition and modernity persists today in the built and social environment.

Since the free-market economic reforms that began under Deng Xiaoping’s leadership in 1978, the divide between China’s urban and rural areas is manifested in state and popular discourses. The progressive and civilized urban modernity is contrasted with the backwardness of the rural (Yan 2008). These discourses are realized materially in projects that attempt to achieve urban modernity through campaigns to encourage orderliness, civilized morality, and cleanliness, as well as large-scale construction projects of malls and skyscrapers (see chapter 4). Meanwhile, rural migrants in the city are often equated by city residents with crime, disease, poverty, and the uncivilized (Solinger 1999; Solinger 2006).

II. The Shift from the Mao Era to Post-Mao Era

The uneven development of Nanjing, especially as exemplified in extreme housing inequality, can be attributed to the commodification of land and consolidation of local state power during the economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s (F. Wu and He 2005). G. Chen (2011) details the history of urban development policies in Nanjing, showing that urbanization was second priority to industrialization during the Maoist era. During economic reform, however, Nanjing trajectory changed to a rapid pace of development:

The real takeoff for Nanjing's municipal development occurred in the 1990s after China's city planning law, enacted in 1989, and tax reform launched in 1994, gave the local government unprecedented legal and economic power to redesign Nanjing's urban space... The momentum they produced in Nanjing was particularly explosive due to the preceding long years of underdevelopment and the prowess of Jiangsu province's economy. This thrust resulted in accelerated urban redevelopment cycles and rapidly rising housing prices, which keep driving Nanjing's poor families to the edge. (G. Chen 2011, 1148)

As a result of uneven development throughout the Republican era and Mao era, Nanjing's rapid pace of contemporary urban redevelopment exacerbates the gap between the rich and the poor.

Three different types of land take-over, eviction, and demolition dominate the process commodification of public land in rural, suburban and urban areas—each with very destructive effects. My focus is specifically on urban demolition, which examines the existing old city neighborhoods—comprised of one-story houses and winding alleys too narrow for cars—that are surrounded on all sides by skyscrapers and high-rise apartment complexes. A mix of rural migrants from all over the country and local Nanjingese residents that are awaiting inevitable and impending urban “renewal” occupies these impoverished and dilapidated neighborhoods.

A. Demolition and Segregation

Contemporary demolition and development projects and discourses reinforce patterns of uneven development and justify socio-spatial segregation (J. Chen, Guo, and F. Wu 2011). Due

to skyrocketing property values, business deals between local governments and private land developers, and the increasing popularity of privately run, gated high-rise compounds, China is razing old cities and displacing the residents to faraway suburbs at an alarming rate. Although reliable demolition statistics for Nanjing are unavailable, Beijing's Old Dilapidated Housing Renewal (ODHR) program evicted more than 500,000 residents from 1990 to 2003. As reported by Meyer (2008), some unofficial estimates of evictions even go as high as 1.25 million residents. According to data provided by the Beijing Academy of Urban Planning, while the number of *hutong*, or alley-ways, in Beijing exceeded 7,000 in the early 1950s and was reduced to about 2,000 in 1990, today only an estimated 900 *hutong* remain in Beijing (Meyer 2008).

Urban poverty in Nanjing can be attributed to the privatization and restructuring of the urban economy, especially in terms of the closure of state-owned factories (G. Chen 2012b, 253). The problems in Nanjing resulting from rapid urban redevelopment are exacerbated in preparation for hosting the Youth Olympics in summer of 2014. Figure 11 shows the new stadium that was built for the Youth Olympics. Figure 12 shows two propaganda posters pasted on a house in Old Nanjing in February 2012 that reflects the debate and resistance of urban development for the purpose of the Youth Olympics.



Figure 11: The 2014 Youth Olympic Stadium in Nanjing, exemplifying the priorities of the city government in promoting this event. *Source:* www.nanjing.gov.cn, accessed April 30, 2014.



Figure 12: Two propaganda posters for the Youth Olympics pasted on the side of a home in Old Nanjing. In the poster on the left side, the message reads: “Safeguard the people’s livelihood; Promote harmony; Revitalize the old city; Welcome the Youth Olympics.” In the poster on the right side, the message declares: “Support government policy; Evict and relocate according to the law; Rationally hold talks together; Reasonable compensation.” “Welcome the Youth Olympics” was a common theme in signs and posters around the city (not only in Old Nanjing). Source: Photo by author, February 2012.

The city is undergoing widespread urban redevelopment as it builds four new subway lines and attempts to conceal or demolish any dilapidated neighborhoods. According to one city official in the Jiangsu Provincial Physical Education Bureau on the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games Preparation Team, the Nanjing city government approved 100 billion RMB (\$16 billion USD) for urban redevelopment projects alone in preparation for the Youth Olympics (Interview with author, November 2011). As such, the city currently serves as a case study for entrepreneurial cities using demolition and redevelopment in place-promotion for large sporting events (Shin 2012), as Beijing was similarly scrutinized during the 2008 Olympics (Broudehoux 2007; X. Ren 2008a). One of the main projects is the construction of several new subway lines, which is one of the principle causes of urban redevelopment and displacement in Nanjing today.

While the overall city populations are very diverse in China, they remain highly segregated at the neighborhood level (Huang 2005). The emergence of class distinctions based on private wealth, as well as recent developments in strong desires for privacy, individualism, and consumption mark stark differences from the former socialist egalitarianism. Hence the recent formations of collective identities on a neighborhood-scale that began to form as a result of distinct divisions in the built and social environments. Pow (2009) argues that gated communities are sites where middle-class interests are being territorially defined through conspicuous consumption and exclusion of non-members. The property market embodies the emergence of new class relations in Chinese society, which L. Zhang (2010) calls the “spatialization of class,” as social stratification is directly related to new urban spatial reconfigurations and spatial exclusion through gated communities and mechanized security systems.

According to He and F. Wu (2009), the socio-spatial consequences of China’s property-led urban redevelopment are deep and widespread. For example, demolition and rapid displacement of entire neighborhoods break original residents’ social networks and deprive them of employment. Furthermore, according to Tomba (2009), the semi-privatization of housing in China has resulted in discourses that justify socio-segregated zoning policies that restructure the city, determine how communities are governed, and institutionalize class segregated community building. The result is the expansion of gated communities, rapid real-estate development into the suburbs, and sections of inner cities “becoming dilapidated and ‘colonized’ by migrants and lower-status urban residents” (Tomba 2009, 598). The existing research thus serves as an important departure point to examine inter-group tensions and socio-spatial segregation in the context of the political economy of housing development in urban China.

B. Previous Case Studies of Nanjing in the Transitional Economy

Four important studies on the geography of urban poverty have been conducted using Nanjing as the case study. G. Chen, Gu, and F. Wu (2006) analyzed data from a survey with recipients of Minimum Living Standard Program (MLSP) and a household questionnaire survey conducted in 2001. The survey covers 78 urban households including 230 people in 11 typical neighborhoods. Samples from 2 of the 11 neighborhoods were located in the area where I conducted my research. In their study, the area where Old Nanjing is located is identified as one of the highest concentrations of household living under the poverty line (defined when the study was conducted in 2000 as 220 RMB/US\$25 per month per capita) in the city of Nanjing. They also measured how many people in each poverty group had their own bathroom (only 20% of residents in Old Nanjing have their own bathroom). Their findings suggest that “the new urban poverty in China is the inevitable result of economic restructuring, the state’s retreat from workplace-based welfare provision and the urbanization process that re-organizes urban spaces” (G. Chen, Gu, and F. Wu 2006, 22). The state thus plays an important role in exacerbating and perpetuation patterns of uneven development and cycles of poverty.

The other studies conducted in Nanjing also identify the state as playing the largest role in reinforcing spatial concentrations of poverty, especially in the southern part of the city where I conducted my fieldwork (F. Wu and He 2005). In a study of Nanjing, some researchers found that “the root of poverty concentration lies in the state-led urban development policy and the socialist housing provision system” (Liu and F. Wu 2006, 624). It is made clear in the research that the state plays a crucial role in dictating the city planning and urban development efforts. The state, as the director of such urban redevelopment efforts, thus exacerbates the spatial concentration of urban poverty. G. Chen (2012b) conducted a survey of poor families in Nanjing

in 2012 and found that the three main factors contributing to housing inequality were the institutional restrictions of the household registration (*hukou*) system, the restructuring of privatization and notions of homeownership in the real-estate market, and resettlement conditions after demolition and displacement in the inner-city. She concluded that China is largely privatization-oriented and development-driven, while the institutional mechanisms to provide basic housing to the poor is nonexistent (G. Chen 2012b).

Finally, a study by G. Chen (2011) used both quantitative analysis of census and household-survey data combined with qualitative analysis of interview transcripts to understand the homeownership transition under the new capitalist economy. Using a framework of structure-agency interaction, she concludes that the transition of private property and homeownership rights in the post-Mao era has been largely detrimental to poor families in Nanjing. Her findings suggest that private homeownership has been promoted amongst the urban poor, resulting in economic exploitation of their family situation, as well as profound deprivation for poor homeowners and non-homeowners. She calls for a new framework for China to address the needs of non-homeowners (G. Chen 2011). In chapter 6 of the thesis, I will use an ethnographic case study from my fieldwork to illustrate the cultural, economic, and social pressure on poor families to own a private home.

III. Methodology

This project was born out of a long history of interest in China and experience in Nanjing in particular. I started learning Chinese seven years ago during my freshman year of college, and I first went to Nanjing on study abroad from 2009-2010. I lived and studied in Nanjing for a year with a host family, who were instrumental in my ability to become fluent in the language by the end of the year. I wrote a research paper in Chinese citing Chinese journal articles about Deng

Xiaoping at the end of my second semester. During the summer of 2010, I taught an English course to twenty adult students, who were civil servants at the Physical Education Bureau of the Nanjing municipal government and earnestly preparing for the Youth Olympics in 2014. In preparation for the foreign guests that would be arriving in the city in four years time, they were required to take an English class for four months during the summer. I befriended a few of my students and they often told me about the urban redevelopment projects that were being planned for the city in preparation for the Youth Olympic games. One of my students even took me to her grandmother's house in Old Nanjing, the same neighborhood I would return to a year later to begin my fieldwork. That experience inspired me to apply for the Fulbright to study demolition, displacement, and dissent related to urban redevelopment in Nanjing. I returned to Nanjing in September of 2011 on the Fulbright and began my ethnographic study of Old Nanjing.

Ethnography provides the best method to examine the nuances and contradictions of popular discourses and everyday practices on an individual level. My ethnographic methods for this paper are participant observation, informal interviews, and semi-structured interviews. The ethnographic participant observation occurred while living in five different field sites and visiting over 15 other sites (various housing compounds) during the course of 14 months in Nanjing, China (Fall and Winter 2011, Spring and Summer 2012, Summer 2013). My five different field sites were as follows. I lived in two different privately managed (*wuye guanli*) apartments in gated communities for two months (rent was 5,000 RMB/\$820 USD per month). I lived in two different publically managed and subsidized work-unit (*danwei*) apartments for seven months (rent was 1,000 RMB/\$164 USD per month). I lived in a two-story house (*laofangzi*) in the old city, the low-income neighborhood Old Nanjing for six months (rent was 500 RMB/\$82 USD per month). I will include more detail on these field sites in the next section.

I see my field sites as windows into a debate on social and class divisions as reflected in differences in the social and built environments and located in the context of rapid shift from a socialist to a capitalist economy (Kitchin and Tate 2000). This is a window into the debate on the regulation of the market by the state and how it influences society (Cloke et al. 2004).

A. Interviews and Coding

The purpose of the interviews were to elicit feedback on participants' perceptions of changes that had occurred during their lifetime, especially regarding demographic shifts and construction projects (see appendix A for a complete list of the interview questions in Chinese and English). My other goal during the interviews was to gain a more thorough understanding of how people of certain socioeconomic groups perceived people of other socioeconomic groups (Elwood and Martin 2000). This gives a look into the larger project of this thesis in how globalization and uneven development may result in an increase in socioeconomic and spatial segregation. The interview questions were divided into three broad categories, 1) questions about their life, including demographic information, childhood experiences, hobbies, plans for the future, and general satisfaction of life, 2) questions about their neighborhood, including reasons for place of residency, in-group and out-group perceptions of various types of people and their neighbors, any changes that have occurred recently or in the past, satisfaction levels with social life and physical conditions of the neighborhood, and any experiences of feeling safe or unsafe, and 3) questions about construction projects, including their feelings about demolition and displacement campaigns, and other urban redevelopment projects in their neighborhood and around the city.

During my time in Nanjing, I interviewed 61 people (37 females and 24 males), which consisted of 35 structured, recorded, and transcribed interviews and 26 informal interviews from

field notes. I interviewed 20 middle-income Nanjing residents living in an apartment complex (*xiaoqu*) earning between 3,000-10,000 RMB/\$490-\$1,600 USD per month. Five of the complexes were gated communities with private management companies and fifteen were subsidized middle and low-income *danwei* apartments largely without gates. However, they are grouped together in the analysis because they were all located in apartment buildings within a complex termed *xiaoqu*, though not necessarily with a management company (*wuye guanli*).¹⁰ I interviewed 21 low-income locals living in one or two story houses in the old city of Old Nanjing earning 1,000-5,000 RMB/\$160-\$820 USD per month and 20 migrant workers living or doing business in Old Nanjing earning 1,000-3,000 RMB/\$160-\$490 USD per month. The migrant workers interviewed for this thesis were long-term and short-term residents of Old Nanjing, usually vegetable or trinket peddlers, scrap collectors, shop owners, or restaurant workers. This population is distinct from other various types of rural migrants such as factory workers or construction workers, whose dwellings (such as dormitories or trailers) are provided for them on-site. Most of the migrants I interviewed found their own housing by living in their shops and/or seeking low rents from local Nanjingese of Old Nanjing. The groups are not rigidly defined categories as many people could be classified into more than one group. For simplicity sake, I divided them based on my knowledge of their socioeconomic status.

The sixty-one interviews were conducted in Nanjing with people ranging from 18-87 years old and lasted from 30 minutes to six hours. Except for three of the interviews with fluent English speakers, the remaining 58 interviews were conducted in Chinese. Five of the interviews conducted in the local Nanjingese dialect were transcribed into Mandarin Chinese with the help of a research assistant. The translations from Chinese into English are my own. The names used

¹⁰ Because this study focuses for the most part on rural migrants and local poor in Old Nanjing, I group all apartment residents together as a broad term of “middle-class.” However, in Chapter 6 I look at the differences between privately managed gated communities and publically subsidized *danwei* apartments.

in this paper are pseudonyms and identifying information has been removed. These interviews are not meant to serve as a representative sample, but rather as an in-depth insight into the diverse experiences of select Nanjing residents (Dunn 2000).

Ethnography is inherently subjective and therefore numerous interpretations of the same data are possible. The following is a brief and simplified description of the method I used to code and analyze the qualitative data (Cope 2003). Coding is a conversation you have with your data in order to weave together subjective experience with abstract concepts. The goal was to bridge the theory and data. I used a grounded theory approach that combines inductive and deductive reasoning as a constant process of going back and forth between the data and theory. I started with a theoretical framework and research questions, while paying close attention to patterns in the data. Coding is a subjective and iterative process, with generally increasing levels of abstraction with each iteration (personal communication with Tim Oakes, August 2013). After reading through the raw data twice, I highlighted repeating ideas using the comment function in Microsoft Word. I made a list of all repeating ideas in a separate document. In the end, I coded ninety repeating ideas. For example, some of the most common repeating ideas were, “I want to be able to provide the things that my kids need,” “buying a house is too expensive,” and “life was different back then.” Next, I grouped the repeating ideas into twenty themes. Some of the themes were dissatisfaction of living environment, the pressure and burden of housing prices and its impact on the family, and satisfaction with social life in the neighborhood. Finally, I grouped the themes into four theoretical constructs: 1) conflict between the active role of the state and the retreat of the welfare/socialist state, 2) conflict between the role of development as a force for good and evil, 3) the depoliticization of the pressure of social reproduction and providing for the family, 4) changing social relations between the rural and urban with simultaneous awareness

and denial of exclusion and discrimination against rural migrants. Although my project grew and changed as I wrote the thesis, those theoretical constructs are the foundation from which this thesis was built. I collected all relevant quotes from the themes I decided to use and selected a few of those quotes to include in the final versions of the chapters.

Despite some socioeconomic differences, there were some significant similarities across the groups. Although they were unprompted (none of my interview questions directly asked about housing prices), members of all three groups stressed at least once the heavy burden and immense pressure of high housing prices, but expressed resignation that there was nothing to be done about it (*mei banfa*). Almost all of the participants with children, both men and women, expressed pressure for their child's future success, mentioned the stress of providing for the future, and indicated concern about being able to provide for the family. These concerns are partially a reflection of a long-standing tradition and culture of upholding the family honor, as well as state discourses of *suzhi*, which emphasizes self-reliance, self-responsibility, and cultivation of global citizens (Ong and L. Zhang 2008; Greenhalgh 2010). Perhaps even more important, this is a result of the biopolitics of the One Child Policy (Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005). I do not reduce these broader social and cultural changes to simplistic economist arguments, but rather intend to lay the foundation for understanding the complexities of the shift toward individualism in the relationship between culture and economics throughout the rest of the thesis.

Within this context there were subtle gender differences. Although women expressed a desire to be able to fulfill the role of caretaker and provider, most men expressed stress to earn a higher-income. Most participants, including the migrants themselves, communicated suspicion towards migrant workers, accusing them of criminal activity or thievery. During all of the

interviews, the participants in all three groups mentioned disgust or annoyance towards uncivilized behavior or *suzhi*, which, when prompted, was described as anything from drinking alcohol, talking loudly, spitting, jaywalking, failing to form a line, wearing pajamas in public, gossiping, or bad hygiene. These behaviors were often associated with migrant workers as a function of their poor educational background. These similarities indicate that the dominant discourses in Chinese society surrounding civilized behavior permeate all social classes.

Being a foreigner and doing research in China is challenging. For each field site, especially Old Nanjing, when I first arrived it was impossible to do anything because my presence attracted so much attention. But after a few months, people got used to seeing me and my presence there was normalized. However, it must be acknowledged that in an interview setting, people will adjust their answers to questions based on historical context, their own expectations, or perceived expectations. Interviews are an articulation of a situation, perhaps practiced or changed based on the situation (Al-Hindi and Kawabata 2002). This may or may not be more skewed because I was a foreigner. There were some significant benefits to being a foreigner doing research in China. One was that people often described very basic, foundational things to me, which they thought were common sense that they might not think would be necessary to explain to a native Chinese person. For example, interviewees would often explicitly explain or describe the rural-urban divide (“No, you don’t understand, in China, rural migrants are backward”) or some other social situation (“You wouldn’t understand as an American, but in China housing prices are everything to us”). During the interview, we started from basics, and it is those basics that I present in this thesis. The issues are highly complex and variable, and my interpretation of the interview transcripts is inherently subjective. The point in conducting such research is to present a window into broader debates about the human condition,

specifically in this case, to make an argument about the importance of the local state in urban China. In other words, the point of ethnography is not to make objective claims about the truth, but rather to build a bridge between the findings, theories, and literatures (the connection to previous literature is what distinguishes this from journalism). My task then is to use the interview transcripts to give one illustration and my interpretation of how structural, political-economic, and geographical changes have ruptured previous notions of rurality, modernity, and development in urban China.

B. Location of Field Sites

One of my primary field sites, Laochengnan, is home to some of Nanjing's oldest housing structures and poorest residents. It is a dilapidated neighborhood near the center of the city of Nanjing composed of a mixture of low-income locals, retirees, and migrant workers who are waiting for news of demolition and displacement. Many of the homes already display official graffiti marks announcing their pending eviction and demolition and propaganda posters and banners encouraging residents to "evict and relocate" are pasted on the outside of most of the homes.

I began conducting research in Old Nanjing in September 2011. I befriended several of the residents and visited the site everyday. In November of that year, I began asking around to see if anyone was looking for a tenant or wanting to rent out a room of their house. One of my main informants, Guo Yifan, got me in touch with his neighbor, a 19-year old female named Xie Rui in vocational veterinary school. Though her mother had since moved out, Xie Rui was still living alone in the house in which she grew up. They agreed I could move in at the end of December 2011 and I lived there until May 2012. Xie Rui and I quickly became best friends. During that time, I conducted in-depth, intensive fieldwork in the neighborhood virtually 24

hours a day, 7 days a week. I enjoyed relatively free access to the neighborhood, and was only twice ever given any trouble by the residents or authorities.¹¹

Home to some of Nanjing's oldest housing structures and poorest residents, Old Nanjing is a small, historic neighborhood located near the center of Nanjing. The meandering alleys are too narrow for vehicles and lined with old homes, or *laofangzi* as the locals call the one-to-two story dilapidated houses with the fading traces of traditional courtyard architecture (see figure 13 for a map with GPS tracks of my field site). The *laofangzi* here may date back over 500 years to the Ming Dynasty (see figure 14 and 15). The residents of this community are currently awaiting eviction and demolition. Many of the residents expect their homes to be relocated within the next year.

¹¹ The first time occurred after eating lunch at a research participant's house when she stopped talking to me. Whenever I would see her or talk to her, she would completely ignore me or ask me, "What are you still doing here?" Oddly, when I returned in summer of 2013 she welcomed me with a cheerful hello and seemed excited to see me. The second time was after 5 homes in the neighborhood were demolished to make way for a parking lot and a "cultural commodity center of exchange." After the construction of the new building was complete, they had a big ceremony and invited some city officials to come. I was there taking pictures and was asked to leave.



Figure 13: Map of the Old Nanjing where I conducted field research. The red tracks are the main alleys where my research participants live and work. I geotagged the red tracks to mark the route I frequently walked on a daily basis (to and from the market, bathrooms, showers, and friends/participants' houses). This image was taken from Google Satellite Images in July 2012.



Figure 14: A typical dwelling in Old Nanjing. Photo by author, October 2011.



Figure 15: The typical landscape of Old Nanjing. The sign reads, “Old Zhao’s Shenzhen Barbecue.” It is a common sight to see street food carts around Old Nanjing, which the rural migrant residents use to sell late-night snacks to club and bar patrons in the area. Photo by author, October 2011.

Old Nanjing has a unique local culture and a distinct local dialect. Walking into the neighborhood, I had the feeling that I was stepping back in time about 50 years—dinner was

cooked on outdoor make-shift coal stoves, chickens walked freely around the streets, pet pigeons cooed, mahjong, cards, and Chinese chess were played and games watched by a crowd of at least 10 adult men, and children and adults alike walked in and out of their neighbors' homes freely. Everybody knew everybody else's business, and it felt similar to a small rural village in many ways. Some of the rural migrant residents said that their experiences in the old city neighborhoods reminded them of their life in the countryside. I made many close friends there.

When I interviewed Xie Rui in February 2012, she described Old Nanjing as I would have. Here is Old Nanjing in her own words: "About Old Nanjing? I've only lived here for three years, so I'm not an expert, but I'll tell you what I think. My favorite neighbor is Big Brother Guo. His family is so hospitable; they have such good hearts. No matter what bad things happen, we can always call him to come fix it. We have that type of relationship that you see often in Old Nanjing; the kind where you can walk in the door without knocking.

If I had the choice to live in Old Nanjing or live in a high-rise apartment, I think living in Old Nanjing would be more fun and more interesting. If you live in a high-rise, you can't have such good neighbors. No one really knows each other, and everyone keeps their door shut. In Old Nanjing, everyone is willing to help everyone else out. You can go into other people's houses without knocking, sit down and have a chat. In a high-rise, it's a really cold feeling among the neighbors."

I also lived in two gated communities run by private management companies for a total of two months (see figure 16). First, for one month in spring of 2012 and then for one month in summer of 2013. During one month in the spring of 2012, I lived in a high-rise and gated apartment complex in Gulou district near the campus of Nanjing University. Gulou district was one of the favored districts during the Republican Era as it housed political elites as well as the

administrative centers of the government. During the summer of 2013, I lived in an upscale apartment complex with 24/7 security guards and within walking distance of my field site in Old Nanjing, which indicates a highly variegated and highly uneven development in the landscape with wealth and impoverished neighborhoods side by side.



Figure 16: Photo of a high-rise gated apartment complex managed by a private company (*wuye guanli*), one of the author's field sites. Photo by author, July 2013.

During fall of 2011 and summer of 2012, I also lived in two different low-income apartment buildings. The compounds were in very close proximity to the university and located in the wealthy district of Gulou, so the area was considered to be relatively safe and the apartments cost more than they normally would because the location was considered to be ideal, within easy proximity to both downtown and the university. The first was a *danwei* apartment for post-doctoral students at Nanjing University where I lived for four months (see figure 17). I had one Chinese roommate, a 40-year old physics post-doc at the university. The second was a *danwei* apartment for faculty at Nanjing University. In that apartment, I had two Chinese roommates, two recent graduates of Nanjing University working their first professional jobs in the city. The students and faculty are given the apartments at subsidized rates to either buy or rent, and then the owners and renters lease and sub-lease the apartments out to other students at

the university and other residents of the area. Both were not gated and did not have security guards, and were considered to be lower class, though acceptable. Some of the units were rented out to migrant workers and the residents complained about them. The apartments were subsidized by the university and thus not as good quality as the private homes, but good value for the price.



Figure 17: Photo of a *danwei* apartment building: One of the author's field sites, a lower income and subsidized *danwei* apartment building without a private management company to manage trash and security. Photo by author, October 2011.

IV. Conclusion

This chapter has established the geographical and historical context of the city of Nanjing and my field sites to establish a foundation of understanding for the rest of the thesis. Nanjing's spatially uneven development can be attributed to the historical context of the state-led projects of modernity and national identity through urban planning, consolidation of local state power and territoriality through the commodification of land, and current practices of displacement and demolition of inner-city residents to make way for new development projects. These spatial practices contribute to the continuation of socio-spatial segregation and discrimination and class antagonism in the city. Nanjing as a historical national capital has a history of tension between

modernity and national identity manifested in its built environment that utilizes Westernized techniques of urban planning while maintaining traditional Chinese architecture. Nanjing also maintains a legacy as a stronghold of industrial production during the socialist era, when industrialization was prioritized over urbanization. As the current provincial capital of Jiangsu province, one of the wealthiest provinces in China, it currently exemplifies the tension it experiences as a historical capital and former industrial center that recently began to integrate itself closely with the global economy. Nanjing's development is highly uneven as the northern part of the city is favored in development over the southern part, as exemplified in the spatial concentration of poverty in certain districts. The resulting socio-spatial segregation and housing inequality is the subject of this thesis.

CHAPTER 4

REARTICULATING CITIZENSHIP IN URBAN CHINA: RURAL MIGRANT WORKERS, INNER-QUALITY, AND “CIVILIZED” BEHAVIOR

I. Introduction

Considerable demographic and social changes have occurred in Chinese cities in the past 30 years with the increasing presence of rural migrants (K. Chan and L. Zhang 1999; L. Zhang 2001; P. Li and Roulleau-Berger 2013). There were 263 million rural migrant workers living in Chinese cities in 2012 (<http://www.stats.gov.cn>, accessed January 2014). The income inequality, social exclusion, and institutional discrimination against rural migrant workers in urban China has been well-documented (W. Wu 2002; Fan 2004; W. Wu 2004; Liu and F. Wu 2006b; J. Chen, Guo, and Wu 2011; X. Wu 2012). The socioeconomic divisions and interactions between various social groups in Chinese cities are particularly complex, especially between the three major social groups: urban middle-class, urban poor, and rural migrants (Fan 2002; Solinger 2002). Detailed studies on urban poverty in China provide evidence of housing inequality and socio-spatial segregation by neighborhood between the three major social groups (Gu and Shen 2003; He and F. Wu 2007; Pow 2009; S. Li, Zhu, and L. Li 2012). The resulting dynamics—urban geographies of inclusion and exclusion—are reflected in the social and built environments.

Discrimination against rural migrants in Chinese cities is rooted in the official and popular discourses of the past 30 years that reject the rural as backward and uncivilized (Yan 2008), while common sense ideas sanction the urban as modern and progressive (Kong 2007).

When the post-Mao liberal economic reforms began to establish state-led capitalism under Deng Xiaoping's leadership in 1978 (Hsu 2007; W. Zhang and Sun 2012), a major shift occurred in collective consciousness. The new prevailing perception glorifies urban modernity while city officials strive for global city status (Kloet and Scheen 2013). Meanwhile dominant discourses reject rural people and livelihoods, which marks a major shift in social relations in the post-Mao era (see chapter 3). The new discourses stand sharply distinct from the Maoist policies of celebrating the rural by sending urban youth to the countryside to learn from the farmers during the "up to the mountains, down to the countryside movement" (*shangshan xiexiang yundong*) (Yan 2008). The amalgamation of institutional and societal practices surrounding the urban-rural dichotomy and rural to urban migration in China thus comprises dynamic and contested definitions of urban citizenship (B. Goodman 1995). In general, these discourses equate the urban with prosperity, orderliness, civilized morality, and cleanliness. Meanwhile, the rural is often equated with disease, poverty, and the uncivilized.¹²

The household registration (*hukou*) system classifies Chinese citizens as either rural or urban and restricts welfare benefits to one's place of registration. Thus rural *hukou* holders living in the city often lack affordable access to welfare benefits in the city, including subsidized housing, education, and health care (Fan 2002). There exists undeniable and profound institutional exclusion and systemic discrimination of rural migrants in the city through the *hukou* system (Solinger 2006; C. Chan 2012). Due to the importance of *hukou* status in Chinese society, many scholars of urban China conflate legal *hukou* status with urban citizenship and assert that rural *hukou* status is the main determining factor in migrant workers' poverty and social exclusion (K. Chan and L. Zhang 1999; Fan 2001; F. Wu 2002; K. Chan 2012).

¹² It should be noted that rural China has been recently re-valued as a new nostalgic project that tries to return to old values and the rural as the center of "Chineseness."

Although I emphasize the importance of the structural and institutional inequity inherent in the *hukou* system, the evidence in this chapter indicates that the importance of the *hukou* in Chinese society has decreased in recent years. While the importance of the institutional nature of *hukou* has decreased, other markers of social status have increased. Social capital is determined instead through behavior and tastes deemed by the middle and upper classes as “civilized” or “uncivilized,” thereby *increasing* the socioeconomic divisions between migrants and locals. *Hukou* is not an adequate measure of urban citizenship in China today because, as my data suggest, *hukou* status is not a determining factor of belonging in a cultural sense. An expanded definition of urban citizenship is greatly needed to go beyond legal structures and include everyday practices of exclusion. I present evidence to claim that social capital, belonging, and class is the most relevant way to discuss membership in urban Chinese society. While the state defines citizenship through *hukou*, urban citizens re-define citizenship for their own purposes to determine who is and is not a worthy urban citizen through judgments of personal behaviors and manners. While I do not suggest that the state exhibits a reduction of power or influence by any means, rather I assert that practices of exclusion based on classifications of social and cultural capital by various urban residents illustrates an act of re-appropriation of official state discourse.

I use the term “urban citizenship” to extend beyond the political usages of nationality and legal residency status in defining citizenship. In establishing a definition of urban citizenship, I draw on the scholarship of Holston and Appadurai (1996): “Moreover, in addition to the legal, it [citizenship] concerns the moral and performative dimensions of membership which define the meanings and practices of belonging in society (200). I further expand the definition of urban citizenship to include relational processes of social capital, cultural membership, and belonging in a local community (Ong 1999; Secor 2003; Staeheli 2003; Staeheli 2012). The term “urban

citizenship” thus encompasses legal status, as well as consumption patterns, normative boundaries, and cultural capital. Drawing on Lefebvre, I define urban society as the interaction of the center and periphery in a new social, political, and cultural sphere embodying the centrality of difference (Stanek 2011). Lefebvre emphasizes the multiscalar character of the city as a centrality of difference: “There is no ‘reality’ without a concentration of energy, without a focus or core—nor, therefore, without the dialectic: centre-periphery...implosion-explosion. What is the ‘subject’? A momentary centre. The ‘object’? Likewise. The body? A focusing of active (productive) energies. The city? The urban sphere? Ditto” (Lefebvre 1991, 399). Indeed the city and the urban sphere were the main focus of Lefebvre’s conceptualization of the centrality of difference. In this chapter, I argue that the migrants in Old Nanjing strive for their right to the city as a centrality of difference, while others try to maintain homogeneity in the city by excluding the newcomers in multiple ways.

Migrant workers are often effectively excluded from urban society based on the material inaccessibility of social capital, such as brand-name cars, large houses, or American college degrees. As such, a relational and processual definition of urban citizenship based on social capital is particularly relevant to urban China today, where migrant workers are excluded from urban society not only on the basis of rural *hukou* status, but also based on the educational background, cultural differences, and social norms defined by urban society.

My research questions therefore ask: how important are daily practices in determining urban citizenship as belonging in urban society? How are notions of belonging in urban space rearticulated in the new capitalist economy? Answering these questions requires examining how everyday practices are changing in urban Chinese society to align with new social norms defined by an ideal lifestyle reliant on upper-class consumption practices. My research involves

qualitative analysis of interview transcripts from the three main social groups in urban China: the middle-class, urban poor, and migrant workers. Interviews from all three groups are included to illustrate the ways in which people from the three different groups are interacting with each other, as well as how various members of each group are accepting or resisting the dominant discourses of civilized behavior and consumption practices defined by the state and upper-class residents.

Although rural migrants are undoubtedly discriminated against in daily life, the *hukou* itself is not as important as it once was in determining belonging. Instead of *hukou* status, level of education and upholding standards of morality, order, and civility in everyday life are the most important indicators of belonging in urban society (Pow 2007). I examine notions of suspicion, ignorance, and exclusion of the migrant worker in everyday practices. When analyzing interview transcripts, the rejection of the migrant worker was related to notions of fear, chaos (*luan*), civility (*wenming*), and quality (*suzhi*).

My first task below is to examine the current literature and theoretical frameworks surrounding urban citizenship and geographies of belonging. Next, I present my ethnographic fieldwork data composed of four sections highlighting the antagonisms and alliances between classes: 1) the declining importance of the *hukou*, 2) friendship and stratification between migrants and locals, 3) official state and unofficial discourses of personal quality (*suzhi*), and 4) discussions of chaos and order. Finally, I conclude that mannerisms signifying association with the urban lifestyle, such as certain consumption habits or “civilized” behavior, are manifested in social and symbolic capital and remain the most widely held standard of acceptance in urban society.

II. Geographies of Urban Citizenship, Belonging, and Exclusion

Marshall (1950) first coined the term “social citizenship” in referring to a citizen’s right to economic welfare and security, and “to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (72). Extending on his notion of social citizenship as reaching beyond legal or political status, citizenship in this chapter will be understood as a sense of belonging and membership in a community (i.e. urban society). Established membership is predicated on the exclusion of rural migrants as marginalized and ostracized outsiders.

I elicit inspiration from Secor’s (2003, 2004; Secor and O’Loughlin 2005) research on rural migrants in Turkey, who are located on the periphery of national identity and cultural belonging. I draw on her definition of urban citizenship as a set of discursive and material relationships between the individual and the city. These relationships are “comprised of practices, meanings and identities” in everyday life (Secor 2003, 149). For example, in speaking about India, Doshi’s (2012) study is also relevant to my case in China:

[t]he idea of accumulation by differentiated displacement illuminates how regimes of redevelopment rule rely on simultaneously inclusive and exclusionary technologies of subjection through eviction and market-oriented resettlement as well as classed, gendered, and ethnicized subjectivities that shape and remake these regimes and urban space itself. (846)

I draw on Doshi’s important contribution to understand how the remaking of Chinese cities creates spaces of inclusion and exclusion based on divisions of class and ethnicity.¹³ I understand urban redevelopment in post-socialist China as a part of the broader processes of global city formation and state restructuring as context to the changing and contested notions of class.

While I understand everyday practices as situated within the political-economic context of state-led capitalism and socialist legacy of the *hukou* system, I move to push beyond the

¹³ Even though most rural migrants are categorized as “Han,” I take into account the profound regional differences in language and culture to understand rural migrants as embodying diverse ethnicities (Honig 1992).

conventional literature to expand the notion of citizenship in China. In framing the conception of urban citizenship as belonging, I draw on Staeheli (2003) when she writes:

... Processes of inclusion and belonging are at the core of citizenship. In this conceptualization, citizenship is relational, and is more of a process than a status...the spaces of citizenship extend beyond the sites of government into the neighborhood, the workplace, public spaces such as streets and parks, and the home. Thus the struggles and practices of citizenship are powerfully shaped and conditioned by spatial relationships and the geography of the city. (99)

In this case, the spatial relationships of the rural/urban dichotomy, rural-to-urban migration, and place-based identity play a crucial role in creating the social relations and processes that constitute citizenship. Indeed, the image of the migrant worker as the dialectical other helps to constitute urban upper-class identity. For example, in figure 18 the waste picker retrieves scrap materials from a demolition site of an old city in Shanghai. The rural migrant worker, the dialectical “other” of urban modernity, constitutes the cleanliness and order associated with modernity through waste picking.



Figure 18: A rural migrant waste picker collects scrap materials from a demolition site in Shanghai. Her work constitutes the urban modernity manifested in the backdrop of the typical urban landscape in urban China comprised primarily of high-rise condos. *Source:* Photo by author, May 2012.

A. The Right to the City

Lefebvre's definition of the "right to the city" is a useful analytic when discussing urban citizenship because it urges for expanded interaction between diverse peoples and multi-functional space in order to create innovative and creative modes of living (Lefebvre 1996). I draw on Secor (2003, 2004) and Lefebvre (1996) to define the right to the city as having access to the opportunities of the city, the legitimate occupation of urban space, and membership in urban society. The right to the city comprises the struggle by the residents to create the city as a work of art, or *oeuvre*, as a centrality of difference created by and for themselves (Lefebvre 1996). For Lefebvre, creating a "centrality of difference" is defined as, "restoring the unity of the moments of space [lived, perceived, conceived], integrating the body shattered in abstract space...and a refusal of the functionalized" (Stanek 2011, 169). The city as an *oeuvre* is opposed to the production of abstract space through capitalist and state modes of production that create spaces of isolation and homogeneity for the purpose of extracting exchange value. My definition of the right to the city as a tool to understand citizenship follows Secor (2004):

...The right to the city refers...to the right to participate in making 'the urban,' the right to inhabit and transform urban space and thus to become a creator of the city as *oeuvre*. In other words, a critical element of urban citizenship struggles—that is, contests over identity, belonging, and rights to the city—is the assertion of the right to become a producer of the city, of urban space, and of citizenship itself. (365)

In other words, the identity and belonging of migrant workers involves a struggle over citizenship and thus contestation over the right to the city as an *oeuvre*. Lefebvre and Secor's notions of the right to the city is relevant to my case study because the legal and social determinants of urban citizenship in China involve a struggle over legitimate occupation of urban space between locals and migrants. Urban citizenship as belonging in China involves contestation over the production of space in the city by and for whom.

B. Bourdieu and Social Capital

Bourdieu's (1984; Bourdieu and Thompson 1991) conception of symbolic and social capital is particularly useful in understanding citizenship and class in urban China. Bourdieu describes class identities as emerging out of both economic resources and cultural orientations. He relates individual behavior to broader structures wherein symbolic and economic capital can be exchanged to establish a certain class identity (e.g., money buys a Rolex watch, a symbol that makes the wearer seem important and powerful). Bourdieun theories of capital are particularly important in the context of China, where authoritarian state structures may play a larger role in citizens' everyday lives than in liberal countries in the West. Bourdieu's theory on the cultural practices and material realities intimately connected to notions of social status illuminates the relationship between *suzhi* and class in urban China (Hanser 2008; L. Zhang 2010).¹⁴ In China, carrying a certain bag, wearing certain clothes, or speaking a certain dialect, can often establish one's "right to the city" as an urban citizen. Indeed, rural migrants are often associated not only with speaking non-standard Mandarin, but also with carrying a large plaid or striped plastic bag.

Bourdieu's (1984) work *Distinction* is based on an ethnography that studied how people choose between what is tacky, trendy, or ugly and how behaviors are classified as "refined" or "crude" in the course of everyday life. Bourdieu is concerned with "how culture and consumption practices contribute to the reproduction of social inequality" (Stevens 1998, 44). For Bourdieu, class is intimately connected to the ways in which habits and aesthetic values are socially constructed. His theory is based on understanding the economic and cultural importance of various types of social, cultural, symbolic, and financial capital, which comes in various forms including clothes, cars, educational degrees, language dialects or accents, art, value judgments,

¹⁴ In this chapter, I also use the term "inner-quality" to refer to the concept of *suzhi*, a measurement of one's personal quality, morality, civilized behavior, and level of education. The Chinese word *suzhi* has multiple definitions in English as the concept does not fully exist in the English language. The numerous English translations of the word include character, essence, qualification, disposition, and constitution. Please see chapter 2 for additional discussion of the term.

and any other method of classification or practice that denotes status (Bourdieu 1984, 471).

Bourdieu sees power as culturally and symbolically created through socialized norms that guide behavior and thinking. Bourdieu's notions of power are often compared to Gramsci's notion of "cultural hegemony" because power for them is not about outright domination, but rather willing consent to social norms (Burawoy 2012).

One of the most important concepts for Bourdieu in linking cultural capital and class formation is *habitus*: "Bourdieu's notion of the 'habitus' is meant to explain how cognitive schema of perception, appreciation, and action come to be subtly inculcated in individuals and groups" (Stevens 1998, 44). The frequent classification of certain behaviors and mannerisms as "uncivilized" or "low-*suzhi*" in urban China today reflects a type of authority over cultural and social norms. It is important to note here that Bourdieu's theory accounts for the flexibility of various definitions and measurements of *suzhi*. For Bourdieu, social and symbolic capital depends on the "field" in which one is located. A "field" for Bourdieu is a network of relationships, such as a religious (e.g., priest and parishioner) or educational (e.g., adviser and student). The authority and power one occupies in any one particular field changes depending on the context and environment (Bourdieu 1984, 87). For example, a Republican politician with a southern accent and cowboy boots will have more symbolic authority and cultural power in Alabama than in Boulder. The field in which one is located influences *habitus*, and in turn, influences how *suzhi* is defined: a Han migrant from the southwestern Sichuan Province exhibits "high *suzhi*" in Tibet, but "low *suzhi*" in Shanghai. Hanser (2008) touches on the importance of flexibility and variability in the notion of class mobility and *habitus* in China:

[t]he social conditions under which an individual's or group's *habitus* developed may not be the same as those under which that *habitus* comes to be exercised. This can result from individual class mobility, as when people move upward or downward in status or class position... The strategies people use to adapt to social change are shaped by historically

constituted dispositions. In China, the urban proletariat is a prime example of a group that is experiencing downward mobility and loss of status in a society that increasingly disavows its state-socialist past. (156-57)

Rural migrants in Nanjing are thus socially excluded based on material differences and cultural practices of *habitus* that effectively prevent them from joining urban society. As I will show in the ethnographic section, by adopting the dress, dialect, and habits of urban residents, migrant workers can, if they choose to do so, become “worthy” residents of the city—in effect, by adopting the *habitus* of the elite class in urban China, they can become urban citizens.

Bourdieu’s examples of fashion, art, and language are not concrete but rather highly variable as they change depending on the current fads and the person engaging in active classification, as well as the field one occupies (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991). For example, a Rolex watch is definitely fashionable, but will have different measures of symbolic capital if one is at a party of hipster graduate students in Boulder as opposed to a Chinese business meeting in Nanjing.

In applying Bourdieu’s conception of social capital and distinction, L. Zhang (2010) writes that the spatialization of class in China is made possible by the production of new housing developments: “[Class in China] consists of taste, judgment, and the acquisition of cultural capital by a social group through *housing choices* and lifestyle practices” (15, emphasis added). She directly relates this notion of class, partially determined by housing choice, to *suzhi* and *habitus*:

...[*suzhi*] refers to the quality of a subject of a population. Like *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977), *suzhi* is neither idiosyncratic nor completely predetermined by the socioeconomic position of a social group; rather, both *suzhi* and *habitus* *mediate between the conditions of existence and subjective experiences*. They are articulated through specific spatial practices and the embodied practices of individuals while mediating between social practices and the conditions of existence. (L. Zhang 2010, 15-16, emphasis added)

L. Zhang (2010) connects physical and social space here with symbolic capital of taste and distinction in the formation of class in urban China. I draw on L. Zhang’s connection between

suzhi and *habitus* to understand the role of *suzhi* in shaping urban citizenship in China. By “mediating between the conditions of existence and subjective experiences,” the complex characteristics of urban citizenship as a relationship between material inequality and cultural context becomes clear (L. Zhang 2010, 15). Bourdieu’s conceptions of social capital connected to Chinese conceptions of *suzhi* can be practically applied to understand the ways in which urban citizenship and class is realized in contemporary urban China. These notions of social difference inform my understanding of citizenship beyond the political-legal code of *hukou* in China.

I emphasize the importance of scale in this question. I do not deny that institutional bias based in the *hukou* system on the national scale provides further structural disadvantage to the socioeconomic status of migrant workers. That is not the question of this chapter because the answer to that question has already been documented. Rather, I am investigating notions of urban citizenship on the neighborhood and individual scale and how belonging and membership in urban society is determined (Ding and Schuermans 2012). In the sense of belonging and exclusion in a community, I understand migrant workers not to be excluded based purely on their rural status or *hukou* alone, but rather on everyday practices that determine their “right to the city.”

III. Antagonisms and Alliances: Discourses of Fear, Chaos, and Civility

The following sections illustrate that the major political-economic transformations in post-Mao China caused massive social upheaval and rearticulations of social class and citizenship in the city. The ethnographic accounts describe migrant workers being socially excluded from urban society based on behaviors, mannerisms, and other forms of social capital. During everyday conversation, many middle and upper class research participants describe certain activities stereotypically associated with rural migrants, such as spitting or speaking non-

standard Mandarin, as uncouth, crude, uncivilized, or “hickish” (*tu*). The city’s residents, businesses, and government officials do not necessarily outright reject migrant workers; quite the contrary in fact, as some in the city welcome and even express appreciation for migrant workers’ cheap labor. For example, Tang Yingxin, a 29-year old female high school teacher living in an apartment and earning 5,000 RMB (\$800 USD) a month, told me during an informal interview:

We cannot do without migrant workers and the cheap labor they provide. We wouldn’t be able to live in the city the way we do without their work, especially since they do very, very tiring work, the kind of work that the local people in the city are not willing to do. We couldn’t have the lifestyle we want without them. (Interview with author, July 9, 2013)

The sense of appreciation for migrant workers’ hard labor suggests that there is often a hidden or shameful awareness of structural inequality. One of the most common stereotypes of migrant workers is that they are hard working and entrepreneurial. Yet, they are *socially* excluded based on cultural and educational differences that essentially prevent them from joining urban society.

A. Declining Importance of the Hukou: Economic Liberalization Trumps Socialist Legacy?

According to my observations, rural migrants are quite knowledgeable about the intricate and complicated laws regarding urban residency status and the *hukou* system. From their perspective, the *hukou* is little more than a formality. It is treated as similar to a birth certificate that does not seriously impede movement into or around the city or hinder one’s ability to find (low-wage) jobs. Although hospital fees are slightly higher than they would be for a local, they were still manageable enough that my respondents reported going to the hospital at normal rates and they sometimes even had obtained special subsidized health insurance. Most migrant children are still able to attend urban elementary schools, though migrant children are often placed in special classes with a less advanced curriculum.¹⁵ Although some faced obstacles to

¹⁵ Students may be separated into an A or B class, with A being more advanced and B being less advanced. While it is not clearly defined as urban and rural, the A class is mostly composed of local children while the B class

middle and high school admissions and high tuition fees, rural *hukou* holders broke this barrier by bribing school officials, excelling on entrance exams (but not for college, see footnote), using connections to obtain admission, or by attending urban schools for migrant children.¹⁶ If the children remained in the countryside with their grandparents, both male and female parents did not hesitate to move to the city for work.

Although some migrants expressed nostalgia for the pollution-free, open spaces, and friendly neighborly relations in the countryside, virtually everyone expressed excitement and enthusiasm for the convenience and modernity of the city. For example, rural migrants almost always communicated full support of city development and construction projects (see chapter 5). They often declared that people and places in the city were more civilized and progressive than in the countryside. Still, fifteen of the twenty migrant workers interviewed had plans to eventually return to their hometowns in the countryside, which perhaps indicates that rural migrants do not necessarily desire urban citizenship. Rather, they desired the employment opportunities that the city offered, but did not necessarily possess a desire to become a member of urban society. Another possible interpretation is that they recognize that urban citizenship—in both a political-legal and cultural belonging sense—is impossible and therefore do not foresee the feasibility of remaining in the countryside, especially after retirement when collection of social security in the city would be impossible.

The institutional obstacles that migrants faced were not so insurmountable as to prevent them from moving to and living in the city. One 22-year old female migrant worker from Henan

is mostly composed of rural migrant children, given one or two exceptions (personal communication with a middle-school teacher in Shanghai, April 2012).

¹⁶ Children of migrant workers who go to high school in the city are still only allowed to sit for the national college entrance examination (*gaokao*) in the location of their *hukou*, which is an example of the continued institutional discrimination of rural *hukou* holders living in cities.

province who had been living in Nanjing for two years and owned a second-hand clothing shop in Old Nanjing approached the *hukou* with the following attitude, “The *hukou* is a hassle [*mafan*], but little more than a piece of paper. It’s not a big deal. There’s nothing we can do about it, but it doesn’t affect our daily life.” Her words reflect a majority of respondents who expressed nonchalance regarding the *hukou*. Most people just shrugged when asked about the role of the *hukou* in their lives and said, “There’s nothing to be done about it [*mei banfa*], we just have to do what we can to survive, and right now living and working in the city is the only way to do that.” Indeed, migrant workers have high incentives to move to the city since jobs are scarce in the countryside, and even low paying jobs in the city allow urban workers to send home remittances. While having a rural *hukou* may or may not still be a burden, most migrants reported that the benefits of moving to the city far outweighed the costs.

Their apathetic attitude toward the *hukou* suggests that, despite the formal institutional barriers to access welfare in the city and an administrative annoyance, for the most part rural migrants are not strictly barred from accessing space or jobs in the city simply because of their rural *hukou*. All but one of the migrant respondents had been living in Nanjing for at least two years. These efforts to make the city their (temporary) home illustrate subtle resistance to the state discourse that defines their rural residency through the political-legal structures of *hukou*. The migrants seem to disregard the state discourse of *hukou* status that tries to stop them from remaining to the city. They engage in counter-hegemony by making the city their own through certain spatial practices, such as squatting in abandoned homes (frequently witnessed in Old Nanjing) or engaging in entrepreneurial business practices, such as selling street food or peddling trinkets (see figure 19), or collecting waste materials for recycling. Sometimes those practices

might be illegal, such as selling street food without a hygiene license. Through these cultural and economic practices, they make the city their home despite the *hukou* restrictions.



Figure 19: A rural migrant street vendor appropriates urban space for herself as she sells kid's toys and school supplies outside of a middle-school located in Old Nanjing. Source: photo by author, May 2013.

B. Conflicting Attitudes between Locals and Migrants: Evidence of Social Stratification

Migrants are often socially discriminated against through the locals' everyday practices of explicit prejudice, social exclusion, and stereotyping. Everyday practices and behavior are thus the most important aspect of determining an individual's urban citizenship and social status in China. These practices range from modes of livelihood, such as selling vegetables, trinkets, or scraps in the street, to mannerisms such as spitting or talking loudly. How much do the locals and migrants comply and recognize these classifications of social capital? I frequently observed both locals and migrants, rich and poor, practicing behaviors designated as "uncivilized." While some accept and perpetuate these notions of cultural capital by complying to social norms, others resist and openly ignore these status symbols, social norms, and class categories (e.g., spitting is a frequent sight despite its classification as "uncivilized" by some).

My interviews illustrate conflicting aspects of antagonisms and alliances between local urbanites and rural migrants. While seven of the middle-income respondents expressed appreciation or sympathy toward migrant workers, ten were openly prejudiced or explicitly discriminatory towards migrant workers (the others were more ambivalent). Sixteen out of twenty middle-class respondents reported that they had never been friends with a migrant worker (“*laiwaigong*”), although ten of them said they would be *willing* to be friends with a migrant worker, but just never had the opportunity. On the other hand, eighteen of twenty-one local Nanjingese respondents reported that they had never been friends with a migrant worker, and only four said they would be willing to be friends with a migrant worker if they had the opportunity. Thirteen of twenty migrant workers surveyed said they had never been friends with a local Nanjingese, though sixteen of twenty said they would be willing to be friends with a local Nanjingese. The most common reasoning on both sides for not engaging in friendship was, “I’ve never had the opportunity, but even if I did, we wouldn’t have anything in common.” The answers to these questions about friendship suggest that due to socioeconomic and spatial divisions between migrants and locals, the two groups rarely have the opportunity to come in contact with one another and form friendships. While locals are most often employed in some capacity in manufacturing, service, or managerial work, and often members of an official work-unit, the migrant workers I interviewed usually work in the informal sector, including selling vegetables, scrap picking and recycling, and informal street vending. Others interviewed included those that work in the formal service sector, such as in spas or hair salons, massage parlors, or karaoke bars (where they live on-site).

Meanwhile, eight of the low-income migrant workers defiantly asserted that they were often discriminated against in a xenophobic manner (*paiwai*), while six other migrant workers

said, “I don’t know what you’re talking about! I’ve never been discriminated against and I have lots of local friends” (the others were more ambivalent). It was clear that the experiences differed greatly from person to person depending on factors such as level of income, education, age, and length of time in the city. Four of the respondents living in Nanjing for over ten years admitted to being discriminated against when they first arrived, but reported that they are no longer ostracized. However, the eight respondents who were discriminated against experienced extreme social divisions between themselves and the local urbanites. For example, Li Jianhua, a 31-year old male migrant worker from Taizhou City of Zhejiang Province (one of the wealthiest provinces in China) was a manager of the public shower who earned 3,000 RMB (\$480 USD) a month and had been living in Nanjing for three years told me, “Yes, I’ve definitely felt excluded in a xenophobic manner (*paiwai*). The Nanjingese think they are so amazing (*liaobuqi*) and they look down on everyone else” (Interview with author, June 2013).¹⁷ Despite some recent changes in attitudes towards social acceptance, especially among the younger generation, the social division between locals and migrants is still very palpable.

Despite obvious socioeconomic and cultural divisions between local Nanjingese and rural migrant workers, some respondents described high levels of friendship or interaction between the two groups. Three of the migrants had local Nanjingese spouses (they reported high levels of friendships and interactions with locals). Some respondents said that because Nanjing was not as advanced or developed as larger cities such as Beijing or Shanghai, people from Nanjing were more accepting and tolerant. For the most part, respondents from all three social groups surveyed over thirty years-old tended to express more discrimination towards migrant workers, while those aged younger than thirty years-old were less likely to exhibit explicit prejudice. The four

¹⁷ Li Jianhua is also quoted in chapter 5 as talking about how backward Nanjing’s development stage is compared to the rapidly developing economy of Taizhou. He had a very negative attitude toward Nanjing in general.

respondents (two local and two migrants) younger than twenty years old insisted that social divisions between local urbanites and rural migrants do not exist. For example, Qiu Lijuan, an 18-year old female migrant from Sihong, who was born and grew up in Nanjing and interning (unpaid) at a beauty salon, said, “Yes, of course I am a friend with the locals. Amongst my friends at school, everyone is the same, I don’t notice any differences between outsiders and Nanjingese” (Interview with author, July 2013).¹⁸ My roommate in Old Nanjing, 20-year old Xie Rui and a friend of Qiu Lijuan’s, agreed and scolded me during our interview for accidentally using a more derogatory term for migrant workers (*nongmingong*, or “peasant”) instead of the more politically correct term, (*wailaigong*, “worker coming from the outside”). The seven college-age interview respondents at Nanjing University referenced their friendships with other students from all over the country at school as an indication that divisions between locals and outsiders was not a problem.

Some middle-income respondents expressed sympathy and appreciation for migrant workers and awareness that their urban economy relies on their low-cost labor. In this sense, migrants are welcomed into the city and even encouraged to move there. Other urbanites volunteered with charities that helped migrant workers in the city. Yu Ling, a 23-year old female getting her Master’s degree in international relations at Nanjing University, told me:

I regard it [volunteering at a migrant school] as a way to help people. Because I think my life is much better than theirs considering their economic situation, because I have a *hukou* in the city and my parents work near my home. I don’t have to experience their situation so I think it’s important for people like me to do something for them to help them. (Interview with author, May 2013)

¹⁸ Even though Qiu Lijuan was born in Nanjing, she still considered herself to be from Sihong in Northern Jiangsu and did not consider herself to be Nanjingese. She and her family had been living in Old Nanjing for five years. In May 2012 I accompanied her on a trip to her hometown, where her maternal grandmother and mother’s relatives still lived in a rural area of northern Jiangsu Province. Her dad was Nanjingese, but she did not associate herself with him. Qiu Lijuan’s family was one of the poorest families I interviewed in Nanjing with a household income of 1,500 RMB (\$240 USD) a month earned from selling street food and used to support Qiu Lijuan’s high school tuition fees and her relatives in the countryside.

Her attitude reveals that the social stratification between urban and rural residents is tangible and obvious. Charities and volunteer organizations are established to provide social welfare in the absence of state services to migrants as a disadvantaged group. Furthermore, the attitude of the need to help migrant workers reflects the awareness of the material inequalities between the two groups. Charitable outreach denotes the socioeconomic gap between the wealthy urban elite and the disadvantaged migrant workers.

The development and charity trope suggests an implicit sense of social distance between rural and urban dwellers. A common stereotype of the migrant worker is that they are extremely hard-working and live terrible and difficult lives. Meanwhile, the locals are often stereotyped as lazy in comparison. Zhu Chongyang, a 40-year old female accountant living in Old Nanjing who had been living in Nanjing for 22 years and was married to a local Nanjingese, told me, “Migrants work really hard to have their own businesses and they can eat relatively more bitterness (*bijiao neng chiku*) than the locals. The local people as I’m sure you have discovered for yourself are a bit lazy” (Zhu Chongyang, interview with author, June 2013). The common stereotype of local Nanjingese laziness represents the division between locals and migrants, as well as reinforces the justification and evidence for social divisions.

Despite some respondents declaring that they saw no difference between migrants and locals, other respondents said they “could never be friends with a migrant worker” for various reasons, illustrating that there is significant social stratification and some explicit discrimination and prejudice against migrant workers amongst some urban residents. Li Xinyi, a 27-year old female elementary school teacher living in a gated community told me:

Mostly the vegetable sellers ask me questions about my job and my salary. I never ask them any questions. Why not? Because there’s nothing for me to ask! What would I ask them, “How do you grow your vegetable?” I’m not interested in their life. No, I would

not be a friend with a migrant because we have nothing in common. I have no connection [*guanxi*] with them. (Interview with author, May 2013)

Her words signify the awareness of exclusion and stratification between classes. Even though they are both Chinese, the vegetable seller and Li Xinyi have nothing in common. Xinyi has more in common with her foreign friends at the international school where she works than with the people selling vegetables at the market.

Other respondents refused to consider the possibility of being friends with a migrant worker. Cao Li, a 45-year old male noodle shop owner in Old Nanjing, considered himself to be on a level above the migrant workers of the area as a native to the city of Nanjing: “Migrant workers from the countryside have a different way of thinking and it’s not okay. I can’t accept it. They are not very educated, nor are they cultured. They are backward and uncivilized,” he explained as he rested his hands on his potbelly and chain-smoked:

Meibanfa, there’s nothing to be done. You simply can’t be friends with someone who is on a different level economically with you. It’s not balanced. It’s like the old Chinese proverb: “Things of one kind come together, and people of one group crowd together” (*wu yi leiju, ren yi qunfen*). (Interview with author, January 2012)

His response reflects an acceptance, or Gramscian “consent,” of the legacy of the socialist state discourse emanating from the *hukou* restrictions on rural to urban migration. These responses illustrate that although some notions of prejudice and discrimination against migrant workers are becoming less noticeable to some, clear delineations between migrants and locals still exist. As the next section illustrates, urban citizenship as belonging is based on mannerisms and behaviors of migrant workers rooted in socioeconomic divisions and material inequalities that are reduced to cultural differences or uncivilized and even morally degenerate behavior.

C. Discourses of Inner-Quality: Producing the Civilized City

Discourses of moral and civilized behavior rather than official *hukou* or class status play a major role in determining belonging in urban Chinese culture. Social exclusion is established through standards of civilized behavior and judgments of inner-quality (*suzhi*). Discussions of *suzhi* are ubiquitous in everyday conversation as it is used to describe any manner of characteristics related to someone's education, mannerisms, or skills. Furthermore, it is pervasive on public service announcements, especially public transportation. For example, many signs in buses proclaim, "Create a civilized city; Ride a civilized bus; Be a civilized person" (see figures 20 and 21). *Suzhi* is thus a part of the officially-sanctioned state discourse as a part of the state's larger project to create "global citizens" prepared to enter the corporate workforce (Greenhalgh 2010).



Figure 20: Bus Stop Propaganda: This bus stop says, "Speak in a civilized manner. Break away with the old customs and establish the new; Let's build a new, civilized city together, hand-in-hand. The civilized are lovely people; If you participate too, it will be even more wonderful."



Figure 21: This bus stop sign says, "Greenify and beautify the ancient city; Dress up a new and beautiful Nanjing; Adhere to society's public morality; Safeguard the city's environment; Love Nanjing; Build Nanjing; Beautify Nanjing; Share the same piece of blue sky; Construct a new homeland together; Build an elegant environment; Live a longer life; We can voluntarily replace the current situation with extreme cleanliness; Create a civilized city; Ride a civilized bus; Be a civilized person."

The state discourse of “act civilize” reinforces notions of exclusion and prejudice against migrant workers and others who are deemed uncivilized by official rhetoric and popular stereotypes. The bus stop signs as state propaganda reveal the government’s investment in perpetuating and reinforcing discourses that encourage the self-responsible citizen. While urban residents create their own definitions of urban citizenship through judgments of moral or normative behavior, and thus produce their own definitions of urban citizenship that ignore the official state discourse of *hukou*. At the same time, the state also reinforces and employs discourses of *suzhi* to perpetuate its agenda to develop Nanjing along a pre-determined trajectory of “civilization.” In other words, the state-perpetuated *suzhi* discourse rearticulates citizenship through a “top-down” structural method that is designed to revitalize the grassroots and build a “civilized” city from the “ground-up.” The discourse of *suzhi* and the resulting behaviors classified as high *suzhi* are thus both a result of and a pushback against official state discourse.

Many participants expressed annoyance or exasperation at the “low *suzhi*” or lack of quality of the Chinese people, expressing shame and embarrassment that many Chinese people did not practice “proper” manners. For example, in response to the question, “what could still be improved about your living environment in Old Nanjing,” one migrant worker responded, “The thing that needs to be improved about Old Nanjing is the people’s *suzhi*. The neighbors are too *guoban*, too “out” [unfashionable]. And they gossip too much. People’s *suzhi* is getting lower, people throwing trash around and talking dirty or cursing [*zanghua*]” (Li Qingzi, 18-year-old female migrant worker, interview with author, May 2012). Unlike some others, her complaint about the neighbors’ *suzhi* is not necessarily associated with migrants or locals. Rather, her concern represents the broader concern of many other Chinese people about their social and cultural capital and worth as global and urban citizens. I also emphasize that not all of the

“civilized” behaviors were practiced by everyone. It was common to see locals and migrants engaging in practices that ignored the normative social codes and continued to practice the “uncivilized” behavior. *Suzhi* is a relatively flexible signifier and one can change or improve one’s *suzhi*. After several years in the city, rural migrants are thus sometimes able to obtain full urban citizenship by adopting the “civilized” mannerisms of the local urbanites.¹⁹ Like Bourdieu’s concept of the “field,” one’s classification authority of measuring *suzhi* and cultural power depend on the network of relationships in which one is located in any particular time or space.

Like *habitus*, the language of *suzhi* depoliticizes class differences. Social status is not about income or occupation or even *hukou* status, but rather about clothes, speech, and leisure activities as well as subtle behaviors and mannerisms, such as spitting. The discourse of *suzhi* attempts to separate cultural difference from poverty, thus both excusing extreme inequality through language of classified differences. The classification of behavior as low or high *suzhi* simultaneously obscures structural inequality and obviates material difference by shifting from the material to the cultural or symbolic forms of capital.

D. Discourses of Fear, Ignorance, and Chaos of the Migrant Worker

Migrants are often associated with uncivilized behavior and low *suzhi*, as well as crime, disorder, or chaos (*luan*). This section is thus about the suspicion, ignorance, and exclusion of the migrant worker surrounding discourses of safety (see also chapter 6 on security mechanisms in gated communities). The fear of migrants is partially founded on the belief that migrant workers are criminals based on the idea that the crime rate in the city increased with their arrival in the city 30 years ago. Zhu Chongyang said, “The migrant workers’ personal quality is no good

¹⁹ Although most are restricted to changing their *hukou* due to economic hardship, rural migrants can even change their official *hukou* status to urban by buying property in a city and obtaining an invitation from a local work-unit.

(*suzhi buxing*), they are disorderly (*luan*), and they make me feel unsafe. Since they started moving in about 20 years ago, we started to get stuff stolen. If the neighborhood was more stable and not constantly changing in population, then we wouldn't have these safety issues" (Zhu Chongyang, interview with author, June 2013). In response to the interview question, "what impact has increased rural migrant populations had in your neighborhood?" nine of the other local, long-term residents mentioned "increased crime" at least once. For example, Hou Bo, a 68-year old male SOE retiree and Old Nanjing resident told me, "Migrants' *suzhi* is not okay, take for example those tattered (*polan*) migrants. They have influenced our security here in Old Nanjing. Their *suzhi* is low and they don't practice good hygiene. When they walk around asking if we have a room for rent and we always say no" (Interview with author, June 2013). His words were a common opinion expressed by many urban residents. Seventeen of the middle-class respondents also mentioned at least once that rural migrants were associated with crime. Whether or not these rumors of criminal activity are true (although very few of my respondents had personally experienced a crime—usually pickpockets or bike theft—many related a story of a friend that had experienced a more serious crime, such as a break-in or assault), the fact that rural migrants are *perceived* to be associated with increased crime in the neighborhood indicates that they are unwelcome in the city.

Drawing on Staeheli's (2003) argument that "citizenship...is more of a process than a status," changes in the city resulting from the type of unprecedented migration and rapid demographic shift ruptured previous social relations. The dramatic process of economic and social change resulted in a rearticulation of citizenship by city residents in order to respond to immense changes in the social landscapes. New neighbors started moving in who did not speak the same dialect and did not have the same customs and habits. Meanwhile, post-industrial

changes meant that inequality was growing and state-owned enterprise employees were being forced to retire early. Amongst these changes, the rural migrant became an easy target for scapegoating and crime was blamed on these new populations. Thus citizenship became associated with a process of considerable social changes, rather than static legal *hukou* status. As the processes of defining and articulating citizenship in the city have been challenged, “the struggles and practices of citizenship are powerfully shaped...by spatial relationships” (Staeheli 2003, 99). The urban-rural divide is growing and becoming defined on certain “uncivilized” behaviors associated with certain groups coming from western and inland China. Following Bourdieu, the differences between rural migrants and urban locals are directly related to class distinctions based not on a static occupational status, but instead on dynamic trends and fads associated with the wealthy elitist class in the “modern” city.

One of the key themes surrounding fear and ignorance of the migrant worker is around the Chinese word *luan*, which means chaos or disorder, and also connotes morally degenerate behavior, especially illicit sexual activity. It is not the actual spaces or activities that are deemed immoral or *luan*, but it is *who* is participating in the activity that matters. Some activities, such as going to massage parlors, drinking alcohol, or singing at karaoke bars, were only deemed uncivilized when associated with migrant workers. I draw inspiration from Rolandsen’s (2011) study of leisure activities in China: “Moral judgments are made on the basis of social status...Karaoke is only unhealthy when practiced by people of a low social standing” (133). Like Bourdieu’s conception of *habitus*, everyday practices are considered *luan* depending on the person participating in the activity. Classification of these behaviors as *luan* is key to understanding the constitution of social class through symbolic and social capital. For example, one respondent said that it made her uncomfortable when she saw migrant workers drinking

alcohol in the cafeteria of her university. Although drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco during lunch is an entirely acceptable activity in Chinese culture, especially among government officials and rich businessmen, but in the context of migrant worker activity, it is deemed inappropriate. Guo Ling, a 27-year old female getting her PhD in sociology at Nanjing University told me, “when we are in the [university] cafeteria, and we see that there are some migrant workers eating there, we will try to distance ourselves from them. I feel like migrant workers are relatively crude (*culu*) and loud. Sometimes they even drink alcohol in the cafeteria” (Interview with author, June 2013). The common social exclusion of migrant workers is often based on discourses of fear or disorder.

The fear of migrant workers is related to the contested notion of urban citizenship as the right to the city as an *oeuvre*. The rejection of migrant workers from the city based on their low *suzhi*, uncivilized behavior, and *luan* activities signify the renunciation of the city as a Lefebvrian centrality of difference and interaction. The people and places perceived as disorderly are scorned, while the normative behaviors based on the organized and planned aspects of the city are considered high-class and cosmopolitan. For example, Li Qingzi, a 27-year old female secretary said,

Every place with a lot of migrants is chaotic (*luan*) and dangerous, like the train stations. I honestly hope that other cities develop quickly so that the migrants will go there and won't come to Nanjing anymore. When I say “migrants” (*wailairen*), I'm talking about the unemployed floating population specifically, not the educated people with jobs that come from other provinces. (Interview with author, July 2013)

Her attitude demonstrates that migrant workers are being rejected based on their so-called *luan* or disorderly activities. This quote includes a theme that is common among the interview respondents, the need to distinguish between rural migrant workers and white-collar workers from other cities. Social stratification is growing because it is important in a conversation to

distinguish what “kind” of migrant one is talking about—white collar (“*bailing*”) or manual laborer (“*gongren*”). Almost all my respondents would ask me to clarify, or would clarify for themselves, what kind of migrant we were talking about, one that was educated and looking for office work, or one that was a peasant doing laborious work (*nongmingong*).²⁰

Those migrant workers who had successfully adapted the customs and habits of local urbanites were often accepted into urban society and described as, “Not *that* kind of rural migrant, I’m talking about the backward kind of rural migrant that just arrived in the city.” The notion of “high-class” and “low-class” migrants was reflected in the different language used to describe these two types of migrants. “*Waidiren*,” or outsider, is a college educated and/or white-collar worker living in Nanjing, but not originally Nanjingese, who may have a rural *hukou*, or an urban *hukou* from another city. “*Wailaigong*,” “*liudongrenkou*” (floating population), or *nongmingong*, signify a rural migrant worker with a manual labor or service-oriented job. The clear distinction between types of migrant worker is closely associated not only with the type of occupation and level of education one obtains, but also the ways that one dresses and behaves. In other words, inclusion/exclusion is more about cultural and symbolic capital than place of origin or conventional “class status,” because exclusion also involves various signifiers that establish one’s worthy presence in the city (Hanser 2008).

Many local urbanite respondents, both middle and low income, expressed how uncomfortable and unsafe it made them feel that migrants would pass in and out of their neighborhoods temporarily, usually only staying for a few months at a time. Yang Juan, a 39-year old female manager of a state-owned company said,

The migrants’ personal quality is not okay (*suzhi buxing*) and their situation is very complicated (*fuza*), you can’t tell who is who, or who is from what province, or who does

²⁰ The term “white-collar” has been translated into Chinese as “*bailing*” and is used in Chinese to describe corporate office jobs.

what job! So our apartment building, which has both locals and migrants alike, is very chaotic, messy, and dirty (*luan, za, zang*). It would be better if we [my family] could live in a high-class (*gaodang*) apartment complex. That really would be worth the money” (Interview with author, July 2013).

Her perception of the migrant workers’ situation as complicated and mixed-up (*fuza*) indicates that the contested urban citizenship of China manifests itself as a struggle over differentiated spaces (i.e. housing occupied by people from numerous and vastly different backgrounds). Her discomfort is a reaction to the fact that most migrants I talked to temporarily occupy urban space to support their livelihoods, but eventually plan to return back home.

People who wish to preserve the status quo as orderly and civilized reject the presence of transient migrants in the city. Along with city residents, city planners and officials in effect reject migrant workers from the city by attempting to produce orderly spaces and promoting unaffordable housing. Following Lefebvre, city planners and government officials as the producers of isolated and homogenous “abstract space,” or space produced for the purpose of extracting exchange value, high land rent values and massive city construction projects of malls and skyscrapers necessarily exclude migrants from the city by creating unaffordable housing and spaces of consumption. Therefore, spaces and people of difference are rejected even when their low-cost labor is welcomed, such as the cheap labor required for construction projects that will later prevent migrants from living in the city by increasing land value. In short, the discourses surrounding fear and ignorance of the migrant worker as *luan* reveal a struggle over social exclusion, a type of social exclusion that has its root in the struggle over the right to the city as an *oeuvre*, the struggle over differentiated places, and the struggle over the right to the city as the centrality of difference.

IV. Conclusion

In investigating urban citizenship in China, discrimination against rural migrants in the city must be understood beyond the institutional framework of the *hukou* system to include a definition of urban citizenship as the relational process that establishes belonging or exclusion in a community. The ethnographic evidence illustrates that while the *hukou* is *not* as important as it once was, the gulf between the rural and urban continues to widen through material inequality and daily practices that categorize certain people and activities as low quality and uncivilized. An importance distinction to be made is that of scale. The *hukou* on the national scale remains a distinct marker of institutional discrimination, but the neighborhood or individual scale as illustrated in my study gives a distinct illustration of daily life as a migrant worker in the city, where the *hukou* is one of many other larger barriers to urban citizenship.

These changes are contextualized in a broader political-economic shift and discourses that revere capitalism and urban modernity while rejecting the rural. As various citizens accept and reject these sanctioned notions of social and cultural capital, the hegemonic project of the state and the ruling classes (e.g., cadres and wealthy elites) is both realized and resisted. By reducing exclusion to social taste or aesthetic difference, exclusion is depoliticized as a function of cultural difference. In other words, symbolic capital is separated from economic capital, even though they are actually inherently linked and mutually constituted. Rather than examining the material inequalities resulting from structural violence, research respondents reduced social differences to variations in taste, lifestyle, or culture.

Practices of incivility and low *suzhi* are significant markers of exclusion and unwanted occupation of urban space. Rural migrants are socially excluded from urban society and rejected from securing social citizenship based on low levels of social, symbolic, cultural, and financial

capital. Western notions of citizenship are thus challenged in the Chinese context because the notion of belonging in the Chinese city is more about personal quality and civilized behavior than about official legal status. Urban citizenship in China primarily concerns discourses of inner-quality (*suzhi*) and civility that discourage and reject the presence of migrants in the city and restrict their “right” to the city. As Secor’s (2003) study in Turkey argued: “[t]he concept of urban citizenship pivots upon the creation of demarcating lines of inclusion and exclusion in the city, of membership within the imagined urban community, and of claims to urban space and the right to the city” (164). Citizenship in China rests on various practices of inclusions and rejection of the migrant worker as the dialectical other of modernity. Where both locals and migrants occupy and appropriate urban space, they actively define urban citizenship through their production of the space of the city. Rural migrants are not divorced from the city because their labor is essential to creating the modern city, but their cultural and social differences are rejected.

Inspired by Secor’s (2004) study of various modes of resistance and appropriation of the term “citizen” in the context of rural to urban migration in Turkey, I showed the way that Chinese citizens are re-appropriating the definitions of citizenship established by the state (i.e. *hukou*) by constructing their own definitions of urban citizenship that are based on behavior classified as acceptable or unacceptable in the city. I showed evidence of the classification of certain types of behaviors that are often associated with rural migrants as “uncivilized” and “low *suzhi*, which creates certain class differences and social boundaries that classify certain people as worthy or unworthy residents of the city.

In this chapter, I used evidence of symbolic capital in the constitution of class identity to challenge the primacy of *hukou* in defining citizenship. My research contributes to Secor (2003) and Staeheli’s (2003) definitions of urban citizenship as a *process* of discursive and material

relations by illustrating how citizenship is contested in China based on behavior, as well as poverty and inequality. The process of demographic and social change with the increasing presence of rural migrants resulted in profound and complex social divisions between locals and rural migrants in Old Nanjing.

Following Bourdieu and L. Zhang, I argue that describing belonging and social status in terms of symbolic and cultural capital is a more relevant way to describe membership in urban China than *hukou* status. In looking at this case, Gramsci might argue that urban Chinese residents, both locals and migrants alike, are practicing both “common sense” (i.e. cultural hegemony of consent) and “good sense” (i.e. counter-hegemony of resistance) by re-defining citizenship not based on the dominant state discourse of *hukou*, but instead on individual re-articulations of appropriate and inappropriate behavior practiced in the city. Meanwhile, state discourses of *suzhi* encourage and classify certain behaviors as acceptable in the city. Bourdieu’s conceptions of social capital connected to Chinese conceptions of *suzhi* can be practically applied to understand the ways in which class is realized in contemporary urban China. In other words, these behaviors reflect broader economic and material determinants of class, but the classification of those behaviors are a result of individual reappropriation of state discourse that determines membership in urban society.

For Lefebvre, this case illustrates the ways that the state, capital, and individual bodies are producing and creating various spaces, which necessarily include/exclude certain populations. For example, city residents are excluded by the interests of capital gains through the production of space that increases high land rent prices. At the same time, migrant workers reappropriate and occupy urban space in various ways to support their livelihoods despite the rejection. This chapter presented evidence to point out practices by migrants that create space in

the city by and for themselves through business practices, such as selling street food or waste picking. This represents an effort by migrants to resist the state discourse of the legal status of *hukou* and emphasizes the role of individual agency in pushing back against hegemonic state structures. Borrowing Lefebvre's (1996) theory, they actively practice their "right to the city" by occupying urban space in order to support their own and family's livelihood. Profound material inequalities prevent some migrants from fully accessing their "right to the city." As Jacobs (1961) once famously wrote, "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody" (238).

CHAPTER 5

DILAPIDATED LANDSCAPES: CONTESTING URBAN MODERNITY IN OLD NANJING

I. Introduction

In this chapter, I build on previous ethnographic studies of urban China that examine the ways in which new housing development parallels the emergence of new class constructions (Pow 2009; L. Zhang 2010; H. Ren 2013). The China studies literature focuses on the role of housing production and consumption in the creation of a small but growing middle-class. Whereas this existing body of work provides the necessary context for conceptions of class formation and social exclusion in gated communities, I instead interrogate similar processes of social formation through representations of the cultural landscape in a different circumstance. I focus on an unusual part of the city—a “slum” under threat of impending demolition.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the ways that the pursuit of “urban modernity” by directing dramatic changes in the built environment has transformed social life in urban China. Drawing on Robinson (2006), I provide a conventional definition of urban modernity as “the cultural experience of contemporary city life and the associated cultural valorization and celebration of innovation and novelty” (4). Urban modernity defined in this way is often realized through the built environment, such as skyscrapers or gridded street designs established on the authority of technical urban planning (Kloet and Scheen 2013). My goal in this chapter is to

challenge the common practice, especially by the Chinese state, that conflates this definition of modernity with prosperity and progress.

To better understand urban modernity in the Chinese context, I am inspired by the research of Hsing (2010), who writing about urban China, argues: “urban construction has therefore expanded from an accumulation project to a territorial project of local state building. Urban modernity, more than industrial modernity, now captures the political imagination of local state leaders” (6). Building on her research on the role of local governments in housing construction, I analyze various perceptions and experiences of Old Nanjing. I challenge a singular definition of urban modernity, defined as a unique urban culture and society based on the innovations of science and technology, by presenting Old Nanjing as an alternative model of progress.

Through informal conversations, I found that many people living both inside and outside of the neighborhood consider Old Nanjing and its residents to be uncivilized. Intrigued by the dominance of this perfunctory attitude across various social groups, I examined a breadth of representations (i.e. “ways of seeing,” such as museums and maps) and practices (i.e. “ways of being and doing,” such as games and shopping) in Old Nanjing. In my analysis, I discovered that internal and external attitudes about the community are actually profoundly diverse. The attitudes reflect differentiated, and sometimes contradictory, opinions about chaos and disorder, which challenge certain definitions of modernity and power relations that promote visions of order. As Jacobs (1961) writes, “There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served” (15). As will be

elaborated in the ethnographic section, the tension between order and disorder that defines modernity is exemplified in the representations and practices of Old Nanjing.

The neighborhood embodies distinct meanings and “ways of seeing” for its various actors. My study of such “representations” encompasses urban planning museum exhibits and common stereotypes of Old Nanjing. For example, some middle-class respondents stereotype the neighborhood as a dangerous and chaotic mess of poverty and crime that should be eliminated. For other residents and officials, however, Old Nanjing is a site of cultural and historical heritage. For neighborhood inhabitants, Old Nanjing is a thriving business district, life-long home, and tight-knit community. As a result, no single vision of an ideal picture of progress is presented; rather this site embodies highly contested ideas of city improvement. Drawing on Robinson (2006), my goal is to “dislocate accounts of urban modernity from the West and to encourage understandings of all cities as potential sites of creativity and innovation” (13). I also scrutinize the landscape of diverse, and sometimes contradictory, practices, such as the government’s decisions to demolish homes and put up propaganda messages. Other common practices observed in the street include operating businesses, playing games, and exchanging support.

The local government strives to eliminate old cities and promote urban construction projects in order to achieve the orderliness and cleanliness that defines urban modernity and to promote state and capital interests (X. Ren 2011; Brown 2013; Dibazar et al. 2013; X. Ren 2014). Because urban land-use projects and property values are measured in terms of the ability of local governments to achieve such ideals, “the local state builds its territorial authority, and finds its political identity in urban modernity” (Hsing 2010, 9). Urban modernity is thus crucial

to understanding the built, social, and political environment of urban China and is a main motivating factor behind the demolition of old cities.

This case study reflects a process that is happening across China: the demolition of old cities and the extinction of traditional street life (F. Wu and He 2005; He and F. Wu 2007; F. Wu 2009; F. Wu 2012). The process of demolition results in a total displacement and disruption of communities and livelihoods, which is a socially destabilizing, violent, and traumatic process. This is thus first and foremost a social justice issue. The representations of Old Nanjing have significant implications for the future physical and social existence of the community. When old cities are conceived and perceived as dilapidated, dangerous, and backward slums, old cities serve as a binary opposite to urban modernity, which threatens their own existence. As city officials and residents categorize Old Nanjing as a dangerous and run-down neighborhood that impedes further economic development, they pursue their agenda of urban renewal and threaten the existence of that community. By better understanding the communities that are under threat of demolition, we can better understand the total process of urban redevelopment projects and agendas (Harb and Deeb 2013). In addition, my study is also significant because researching social divisions is imperative to forming cohesive, safe, and vibrant communities. Furthermore, studying the practices of Old Nanjing residents informs our understanding of the way changes in the built environment influence and are influenced by social life.

In this case study, I illustrate that competing experiences and visions exist in the material and social landscapes of Old Nanjing. I ask the question: how are the homes and people of Old Nanjing regarded by the city government and residents through representations and practices? To answer this question, I examine a variety of evidence from both the built and social environment, including interviews, observations, museum exhibits, and government announcements. This

evidence reveals multiple visions of what ideal progress and economic development looks like. For example, while the material poverty of the neighborhood gives an initial impression of discomfort, and according to some respondents “backwardness,” many others describe their environs as cozy and convenient. Whereas some describe themselves and their neighbors as displaying low *suzhi*, others report that their neighbors are akin to family.²¹ The disputed views of Old Nanjing depict the possibilities of multiple visions of a functional and prosperous city. My theoretical starting point for this process includes a cultural materialist understanding of landscape and Lefebvre’s notions of the mutually constitutive relationship between spatial production, everyday practice, and social formation.

After establishing a theoretical framework, the first ethnographic section details the government’s view of Old Nanjing through representation (e.g., in the city planning museum) and practice (e.g., eviction notices). The second ethnographic section reviews the ways the neighborhood is described by middle-class interview respondents living outside of Old Nanjing as a dangerous and uncivilized place. The third ethnographic section outlines the personal narratives of the neighborhood residents, both locals and migrants who discuss civilized and uncivilized landscapes. The fourth ethnographic section describes observations of everyday practices in Old Nanjing (e.g., mahjong, chess, card playing, prostitution, entrepreneurialism) that reinforce contested images of the neighborhood. The material, cultural, and social landscape illustrates the representations and practices constitutive of class formation in Old Nanjing.

II. Reading the Landscape? State Manipulation and Power Relations

In this chapter, I merge Lefebvre’s theories of space with a cultural materialist approach to the landscape (see chapter 2 for full discussion). Lefebvre (1991) reveals that the dominant power relations of state and capital construct false signs to neutralize social, physical, and mental

²¹ See Chapter 4 for a full discussion of *suzhi*, or “personal quality.”

space. State power attempts to characterize the entire system of existing material, social, and discursive relations as natural, though in actuality these power relations are socially constructed: “The state has control of all existing codes. It may on occasion invent new codes and impose them, but it is not itself bound by them, and can shift from one to another at will. The state manipulates codes. Power never allows itself to be confined within a single logic” (Lefebvre 1991, 162). Lefebvre warns that one cannot simply decode the symbolic constructions of space because state and capital interests construct deceptive signs that serve to mask inequality. In other words, actors may have different roles and agency in producing space, but there are certain political and economic structures that write the dominant scripts.

According to Lefebvre (1991), the signs constructed by state and business interests conceal the inequitable material and social relations that underpin the production of space: “[Social space] is equivalent...to a set of institutional and ideological superstructures that are not presented for what they are...it [social space] assumes an outward appearance of neutrality, of insignificance, of semiological destitution, and of emptiness (or absence)” (349). It is impossible to simply “read” space as a text because, similar to other commodities of alienated labor of capitalist production, the landscape conceals the social labor required for its production. For example, the skyscrapers of Shanghai signify modernity, prosperity, and power, which on the surface obscures the fact that poor, rural migrant construction workers were the main contributors to their existence. The wealth and modernity of Shanghai is further predicated on the poverty and “backwardness” of the rural inland regions of the country.

Though space and landscape is subject to multiple interpretations, decoding space is incredibly useful. Lefebvre (1991, 163) insists that the symbolic and material must be related to one another in order to illustrate “a certain unity” between physical and mental space. How a

space is represented both materially and discursively matters for its existence as social, physical, and mental space:

The *object* of knowledge is, precisely, the fragmented and uncertain connection between elaborated representations of space on the one hand and representational spaces (along with their underpinnings) on the other; and this ‘object’ implies (and explains) a *subject*—that subject in whom lived, perceived and conceived (known) come together within a spatial practice. (Lefebvre 1991, 230, emphasis in original)

The various ways of seeing the landscape reveal both social formations realized in the space and the current and future viability of those social formations. Lefebvre argues that for a social group to exist, it must produce and occupy space: “the production of space...has nothing incidental about it: it is a matter of life and death” (Lefebvre 1991, 417). Though Lefebvre encourages a rigorous engagement with both the symbolic and material forms of space, he also cautions to be wary of false signs meant to conceal inequality and promote the interests of those in power, such as the state. I argue, however, that in the transition to a market economy, where dramatic and rapid changes are occurring especially in the built environment of new skyscrapers and apartment complexes, the landscape and its constitution of class in urban China is more obvious and easier to read than Lefebvre suggests.

Landscape study is one lens through which to examine the spaces of social relations and representations in the construction of social formation. According to Mitchell (2000):

It [landscape] is a way of carefully selecting and representing the world so as to give it a particular meaning. Landscape is thus an important ingredient in constructing consent and identity—in organizing a receptive audience—for the projects and desires of powerful social interests. (100)

For example, the modernizing influences of state and capital interests portray the dilapidated landscape of Old Nanjing as one of poverty, backwardness, destitution, and crime. The landscape signified as such is manipulated because in actuality Old Nanjing is a thriving business district comprised of a diverse and intimate community with lively public life in the street. Yet the

constructed image of a dangerous and undeveloped landscape is crucial for local state and business ventures hoping to demolish the neighborhood to make way for high-value real estate, such as malls and condos.

The cultural landscape of Old Nanjing simultaneously obscures and obviates the power of the state and capital and the creation of new class formations through the built environment. The dilapidated landscape constructs an image of the backward, poor other in dialectical tension to the modernity of the middle-class. This furthers the agenda of capital accumulation in the built environment of new housing to accommodate the new middle-class interests. L. Zhang (2010) applies Lefebvre's theories to the current situation in urban China. From the theory of the production of space and cultural materialist approaches to class, she develops the analytic of the "spatialization of class" to describe the ways in which urban society is divided today: "Not only is urban space radically reorganized into visibly hierarchical and segregated form by recent real estate developments but also new social groups and class subjects are created and made discernible through this spatial production" (L. Zhang 2010, 14). Following Lefebvre, she explicitly aims to combine economy and culture in her argument. She suggests that the formation of the middle-class in China is established through the spatial production of gated communities. Indeed, homeownership is the most visible and tangible source of class status and social divisions in China today (G. Chen 2011). I employ Lefebvre's triad of physical space (i.e., the perceived), mental space (i.e., the conceived), and social space (i.e., the lived) in order to better understand the relationships established in the data. The reciprocal role of social formation, everyday practice, and spatial production is crucial to the making of class through the landscape.

III. Constructing Cultural Landscapes of Modernity and Backwardness

This ethnography studies the cultural practices that define and reinforce social divisions through categorical differences of modernity versus backwardness. The following sections use landscape study as a lens to outline the representations (e.g., stereotypes) and practices (e.g., eviction and demolition) of Old Nanjing that accept and resist the dominant discourses that contribute to class construction. Social space is defined by Lefebvre (1991) as the merging of materialism and idealism through the lived space of everyday life. The social space that these class divisions occupy is imperative for social formation, otherwise the social group becomes extinct. Lefebvre (1991) argues that spatial production is *necessary* to the realization of a social group: “Any ‘social existence’ aspiring or claiming to be ‘real,’ but failing to produce its own space, would be a strange entity, a very peculiar kind of abstraction unable to escape from the ideological...realm” (53). The evidence presented illuminates the ways in which the material (i.e., physical space) and idealist (i.e., mental space) forms of the landscape construct categories of residents as civilized or uncivilized and thereby produce social space and contribute to class formation. The ultimate aim of the chapter is to challenge a single definition of urban modernity and emphasize that multiple versions of urban vitality, functionality, and progress exist in Old Nanjing.

A. Representations of Old Nanjing by the Nanjing City Government at the Urban Planning Museum: Constructing the Modern Versus Traditional Binary

The representations of Old Nanjing at the Nanjing Exhibition Hall of Urban Planning and Development define and reinforce visions of urban modernity.²² The Nanjing city government defines urban modernity through exhibits, models, and videos at the urban planning museum that display investments in technological innovation and building construction in order to achieve

²² The exhibition hall is hereafter referred to as the “urban planning museum,” which is the common descriptor used when describing these Chinese exhibition halls in English.

economic, social, and cultural advancement. This section will illustrate that planning models make clear that the city government endeavors to reach targets of “optimal” urban development as realized through the materiality of the built environment (e.g., malls and parks). The city as a whole is represented in the exhibit hall through the binary of either modern (e.g., models of skyscrapers) or traditional (e.g., historical or cultural Chinese architecture). The images of old city neighborhoods described as “traditional” constitute the modernity of new construction projects and implicitly reinforce conceptions of backwardness associated with the old city neighborhoods. These representations of old city neighborhoods further the government’s agenda to promote demolition projects and accommodate new real estate. However, it is crucial to emphasize that the valorization of tradition is inherent to the construction of the modern/traditional binary. In other words, traditional “Chineseness,” especially the rural as traditional, is a fundamental and constitutive part of urban modernity (Oakes 1998).

The model of extant development in present-day Nanjing in Figure 22 intends to illustrate the recent urban development and construction projects as crucial technological and scientific innovation. The purpose of this exhibit is to portray Nanjing as a city that has already achieved the status of a progressive and modern city, and that the city will continue to pursue hi-tech improvements, in part by developing the built environment. These projects, the exhibit insists, will lead Nanjing to achieve social and cultural advancement, eventually earning global recognition as a modern city.

The model includes old city neighborhoods. Old Nanjing, circled in red, was likely included in the model because its “quaint” traditions and cultural heritage constitutes the image of the rest of the city as modern, advanced, and orderly. The representation of the city in these

static models reinforces images of modernity and development as organized and planned, rather than the reality of messiness and disorder in everyday life.



Figure 22: Exhibit at the urban planning museum: This includes a small-scale model of Old Nanjing, circled here in red in the southern section of the city. Old city neighborhoods stand as a representation of tradition in contrast to the new developments of the rest of the city as a model for progress and development. The exhibit constructed in such a way inevitably reinforces the dialectical narrative of modernity as progress and tradition as backwardness. *Source*: Photo by author, July 2013.

In order to achieve “progress” as defined by the city government and realized in the built environment of the city, the government must engage in massive urban redevelopment projects that require the demolition of old city neighborhoods. Old Nanjing stands as an obstacle to the realization of complete urban modernity. The representations of the modern city of skyscrapers compared to a “traditional” landscape of the old cities constitute Old Nanjing as a binary opposite to the modernity of high-rise buildings. Figure 23 is a photo of a different exhibit in the urban planning museum. This exhibit explicitly includes a clear label (circled here in yellow-green) that declares Old Nanjing (circled here in red) specifically to be the “Old Nanjing Historical and Cultural Protection and Rejuvenation Area [*chengnan lishi wenhua baohu yu*

fuxing pianqu].” As this chapter will later discuss, this label is contradictory because the government is actively involved in eviction and demolition projects in Old Nanjing. The white buildings perhaps represent the newer developments of the city, while the brown buildings indicate older areas of the city, reinforcing images of modernity as the brilliant, white, cleanliness of progress contrasted with the tradition as the brown and dirty dullness of low-rise buildings.

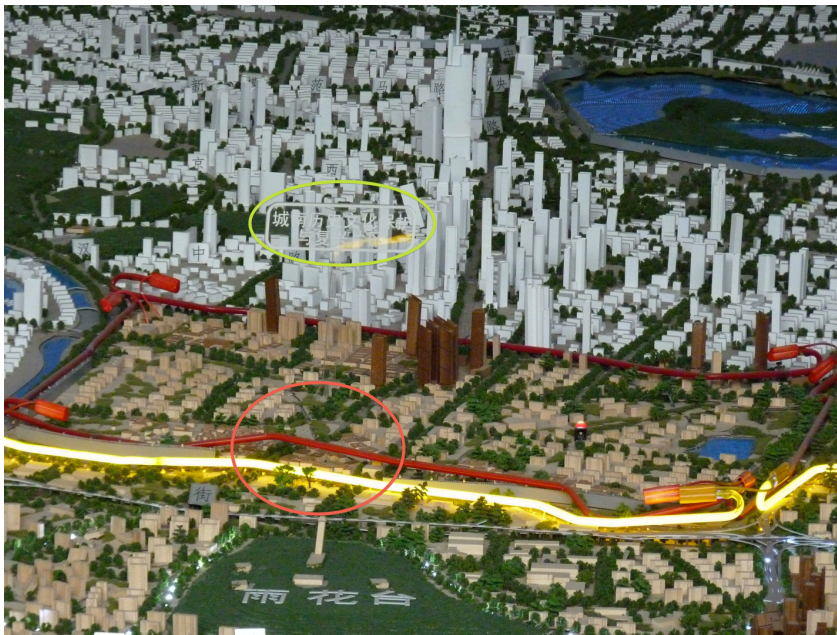


Figure 23: Urban Planning Museum Exhibit: The red circle indicates the location of Old Nanjing. This section is labeled by the sign encircled in yellow-green as a cultural and historical preservation and rejuvenation district (*chengnan lishi wenhua baohu yu fuxing pianqu*). The representations of Old Nanjing as traditional reinforce notions of the urban modernity of skyscrapers in the background. The yellow cord across the picture represents the location of the ancient city wall. *Source*: Photo by author, July 2013.

At the exhibit hall, Old Nanjing is simultaneously valued and de-valued. It is valued as a site of cultural and traditional influence, but also de-valued as its presence impedes future development and serves as the oppositional other to modernity. For example, figure 23 is one of the full-size city models during an electronically interactive exhibit that shows the city lights of Nanjing. Similar to the white and brown divisions of the model above, in figure 24 the

skyscrapers are lit up as representations of modernity and technological advancement, while the tracts of land representing the older areas of the city are not lit up, but instead left in the dark.

This image furthers the representation of the older parts of the city as backward and a potential imposition to development.

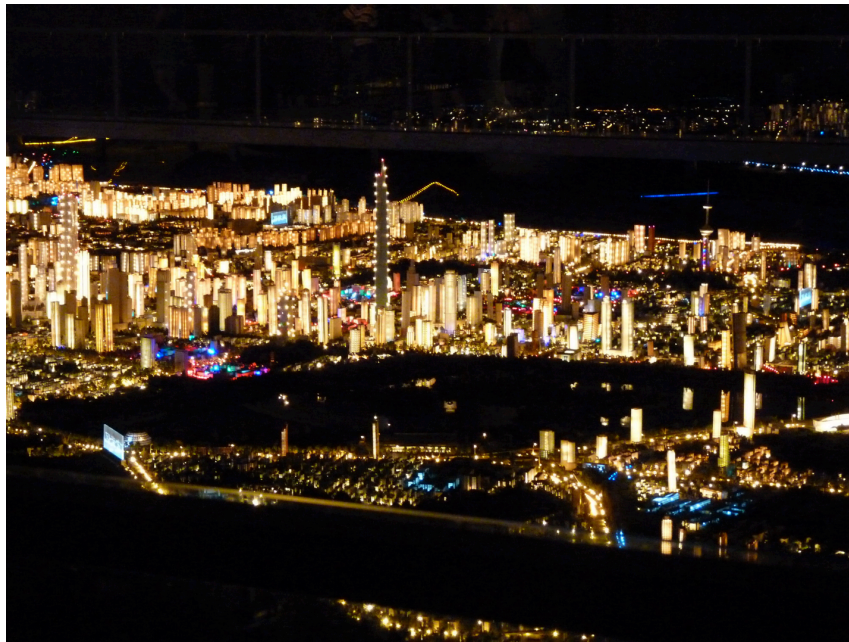


Figure 24: This interactive exhibit lit up periodically to display the city lights of Nanjing in an effort to perpetuate notions of modernity in the built environment of new urban development and construction projects, especially the skyscrapers. *Source:* Photo by author, July 2013.

The idea of the city as urban and modern is perpetuated in the official discourse of the museum that produces images of the built environment, especially skyscrapers, as representative of cultural advancement and economic prosperity. For example, in connection with the exhibit portrayed in figures 22 and 24, they periodically played a video called “Nanjing: Modernization and Internationalization of Cultural and Human Social Activities.”²³ During the video they used the word “modern metropolis” to describe Nanjing, and the images used to represent Nanjing consisted of skyscrapers, scientists in a lab, and high-speed trains. Meanwhile, the narrator reads,

²³ The video is available in Chinese with English subtitles on my YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnnBqWmNwHY>.

“A modern metropolis of Nanjing is marching forward and upward in the world,” while describing and showing various advances in the built environment, including scientific innovation, computer software development zones, and shopping districts while the screen panned over a landscape of clean and orderly skyscrapers and parks. The narrator in the video recited the following dialogue in the background:

A smart city is being formed, [with] safe and smooth traffic, convenient and excellent medical service, [and] thoughtful city management...Nanjing is adopting the policy of ‘a three part city,’ to claim the best scenery as a humanistic, green, and happy metropolis. The people’s livelihood is the top priority so that everyone can enjoy a happy life together in Nanjing...Nanjing will take the lead in reaching modernization as a modern, international, humanistic, and green metropolis with suitable living conditions, full of vigor and glamour, as a modern place to present to the world. (Video from Nanjing Urban Planning and Development Museum and Exhibition Hall [*Nanjingshi Guihua Jianshe Zhanlanguan*], viewed and recorded by author on July 30, 2013)

The video was played in the background of the city model in figures 1 and 3, which portrayed Nanjing as the civilized, orderly, and ideal modern city. This example indicates that the city government portrays the urban landscape of skyscrapers and other improvements in the built environment as the embodiment of modernity.

The video also mentioned that Nanjing was preserving its cultural and historical heritage in its old cities while it showed images of traditional Chinese architecture, such as pagodas and courtyard homes. Another section of the museum was dedicated to the “protection of the well-known historical and cultural city” and included Old Nanjing in its list of protected neighborhoods. See figure 25 for a distribution map shown in one of the exhibits of historical and cultural conservation districts in the main urban area of Nanjing.



Figure 25: Protection of the Well-Known Historical and Cultural City: Old Nanjing is labeled on this map a “well-known historical and cultural city.” The blue dots represent national level cultural preservation units, the larger red dots represent county level cultural preservation units, and the orange dots represent city level cultural preservation units. Old Nanjing is labeled at the city level with an orange dot. *Source:* Photo by author, July 2013.

A growing trend in Chinese cities is to preserve old city neighborhoods as heritage sites and make them tourist attractions (X. Ren 2008b). The representation of Old Nanjing as a cultural and historical heritage site essentializes Old Nanjing as the traditional, which then reinforces the image of high-rise buildings as modern. Meanwhile, other sections of the exhibit hall were dedicated to showing the plans for expanding and upgrading Nanjing as a more advanced, orderly, and prosperous city (see figure 26). The urban planning presentations conceived space in the Lefebvrian sense as abstract—devoid of social relations—by seeking to divorce the physical space from social space. While this section illustrates the city’s attempts to separate social relations from physical space, I ultimately aims to show the inevitable links between lived, perceived, and conceived space.



Figure 26: Images of futuristic city plans of urban development in the currently undeveloped suburbs of Nanjing. The title of the plan says, “Land Use Plan.” *Source:* Photo by author, July 2013.

The only way to achieve the ambitious plans of the city government will be eliminate old cities. When viewing the plans for future development at the museum, one has to wonder how many people will be displaced to realize the goals of these city planners and officials. One typical city plan on exhibit at the museum displayed the future development of a modern, orderly, and prosperous Nanjing in computer-generated and futuristic images of brightly colored skyscrapers in an office park. Its description illustrates how the insecure local government is attempting to assuage complaints over modern designs and justify its vision of technological advancement. The title of the plan is “Land Design” and the description of the plans reads,

This business district’s major function is to provide high-end occupations (*gaoduan bangong*) and scientific research facilities. A complete set of business and shopping activities are concentrated on both sides of the main avenue that cuts through the main

commercial section. This district's buildings and skyscrapers are the first priority. The measurements are such that they allow pedestrians enough freedom to traverse easily across public space. The design encourages a series of possibilities to arrange interaction and relaxation on the terraces. In this area we guarantee that every tract of land contains mixed-functionality; definitely not built in the way that every concrete piece of land's function carry out strict limitations. (see appendix B for the Chinese version)

The plan seems to anticipate criticism over single-functional spaces common in traditional Western and contemporary Chinese versions of urban planning. This exhibit of the future design plan of this tract of land appears to be aimed at attracting more foreign investment. City officials promote the image of Nanjing as advanced, while representing the poverty of Old Nanjing as “traditional” to negate the image of modernity that they desire. In Smith's (2008) words that draw on Lefebvre, “While the emphasis here is on the direct physical production of space, the production of space also implies the production of the meaning, concepts, and consciousness of space which are inseparably linked to its physical production” (107). In understanding that modernity is constituted only in relation to its binary opposite, the tradition and poverty of Old Nanjing provides a stereotypical “other” to define the city's progress. One of the local government's solutions to poverty as a threat to their goal of modernization is to demolish such neighborhoods to improve the city image. The government's other solution to Old Nanjing as an obstacle to achieving the ideal modern city is to deem old cities as traditional sites of cultural heritage. The label of “traditional” placed onto poor neighborhoods furthers the image of the neighborhood as backward and placed in opposition to the goals of modernity and development.

In conclusion, this state-run museum displays the city government's definition of modernity and progress as realized through advancement and innovation in the built environment. The museum exhibits construction plans to build a “modern” and technologically advanced city, while it also declares Old Nanjing as a site of cultural and historical preservation. These examples from the urban planning exhibit hall reveal that the representation of the urban

landscape by the city government recognizes the tension between preservation and development of the built environment. Their attempt to reconcile that tension by labeling dilapidated old cities as “sites of cultural heritage” illustrates a contested urban modernity between the development model paradigm and traditional cultural heritage. Old Nanjing is also valued in some narratives for its quaintness as a historical and cultural preservation site, which also has potential as a tourist attraction.²⁴ This contested modernity is based on the modern/backward binary that excludes the backward as defined by poverty and the rural from its visions of the future of Nanjing.

B. Representations of Old Nanjing by the Middle-Classes: Constructing Uncivilized Inhabitants of Old Nanjing

In my interviews, middle-class respondents’ reactions to Old Nanjing demonstrate that the dilapidated homes and disorderly streets of Old Nanjing constitute the poor residents as uncivilized and backward. The “middle-class” is defined here as the 20 Nanjing residents living in an apartment complex (*xiaoqu*) outside of the Old Nanjing area earning between 3,000-10,000 RMB (\$490-\$1,600 USD) per month. Some of the complexes were gated communities with private management companies and some were subsidized low-income and un-gated apartments. However, they are grouped together in that they were all located in apartment buildings within a complex (*xiaoqu*), though not necessarily with a management company (see chapter 6 for further analysis of the middle classes). The middle-class interview respondents generally conceive of the people living in Old Nanjing as being uncivilized.

²⁴ Old Nanjing is located within walking distance of the Confucius Temple, a large tourist attraction in Nanjing and they built an office in Old Nanjing called the “Cultural Commodity Bureau” and some homes were labeled as tourist attractions. Although I would not claim that Old Nanjing is a tourist attraction, every once in a while I saw wealthier Chinese tourists would walk around taking pictures of the homes in Old Nanjing with expensive, professional cameras.

The landscape of Old Nanjing represents the juxtaposition of modern as order and backward as disorder, thus constituting class formation of the lower classes through the disorderly landscape. Li Xinyi, a 27-year old married female teacher with a household income of 30,000 RMB (\$4,800 USD) a month,²⁵ is the resident of an upscale and gated community in the suburbs of Nanjing, but she frequently goes to downtown for shopping and entertainment. When I asked her what her impressions of Old Nanjing were, she told me:

[Old Nanjing] is just such chaos! There are *so* many people, cars, motorcycles, and street vendors. It's all because of street vendors! It's just very noisy, crowded, and very dusty over there. And the people... The people who get on the metro from that stop are usually either rural migrant workers [*nongmingong*, derogatory term] or... you can just tell by the way they are dressed, you just know they are in the flea bottom, I don't know what you call it, the slum. You can just tell they are from the slum or from the countryside. And also there is a street with a lot of street food and a lot of street vendors, so my impression is just a place full of chaos... The four words to describe that place is mixed, dirty, chaotic, and inferior [*za, zang, luan, cha*]"(Interview with author, May 2013).

The middle-class interview respondents are conflicted over the development plans for the neighborhood and the material value of dilapidated old cities. While they complain about the pollution and traffic that construction causes, they also emphasize that new construction will eventually beautify the city for its residents and give a better image of the city overall. At the same time, many of the respondents also referred to the Old Nanjing neighborhood as being a site of historical and culture preservation that the city should work to protect. Only 3 out of 20 respondents said that overall they were satisfied with the way the urban development projects were being carried out in Nanjing. Thirteen out of 20 middle-class respondents said they were generally dissatisfied with the urban development projects in Nanjing because of air pollution, traffic, and other daily inconveniences that it caused. Six out of 20 respondents said that despite their dissatisfaction with the air pollution and traffic, such development was necessary to overall

²⁵ While her salary as a teacher is 4,000 RMB/\$640 USD a month, her husband earns 26,000 RMB/\$4,160 USD a month as a math teacher at an international high school in Nanjing.

improve the lives of a majority of people involved, both for the city's image and investment, but also to improve the lives of the people that live there. Five out of 20 respondents mentioned at least once that Old Nanjing should be preserved for cultural or historical heritage reasons. Three out of 20 respondents said that the development projects were overall more harmful than beneficial to everyone involved, and especially for the people already living there, it caused more social problems than it helped. The middle-class respondents' conflicted support for urban redevelopment projects further exemplifies the tension and internal contradictions of development plans for the area.

The residents of Old Nanjing are stereotyped as different by many of the middle-class interview respondents. There is a general discrimination against the poor people that live in Old Nanjing. For example, Li Qingzi, a 29-year old female secretary with an income of 4,000 RMB (\$643 USD) per month and living in a *danwei* apartment, expressed, "In China, those people [in Old Nanjing] are under-educated and associated with thievery and burglary. I could never be their friend. Furthermore, in my life the choices I make means I have no opportunity to meet these kinds of people" (Interview with author, July 2013). Her prejudice indicates the social stratification and social exclusion that exists in Nanjing. In this way, migrants and the poor locals are "othered" as strange, unfamiliar people and Old Nanjing is "othered" as a foreign place.

I specifically argue in this section that the landscape of Old Nanjing illustrates that while the material homes have been de-valued, the residents too are conceived of by middle-class interview respondents as possessing no value or sometimes even negative value. The neighborhood is represented in the popular imagination as a dangerous neighborhood, as "somewhere you wouldn't want to walk around in alone at night" (Li Hua, interview with author, July 2013). In the popular imagination, the general impression of the place of Old Nanjing is that

it is dangerous and chaotic (*luan*). In referring to “low-suzhi” activities like setting off firecrackers late at night, Li Hua, a 27-year old male salesperson earning 3,000 RMB (\$480 USD) per month and living in a gated community said, “I believe you [referring to the author] probably experienced something like that in the Old Nanjing area” (Interview with author, July 30, 2013). Such ideas about Old Nanjing comprising “low-suzhi” activities were pervasive and entered into conversations with me anytime an acquaintance learned where I lived. Their reactions of surprise and concern about me living there reveals that Old Nanjing as a dilapidated and devalued landscape was conflated in the popular imagination with backwardness and crime. The landscape of the modern is thus predicated on the exclusion of the uncivilized subjects of Old Nanjing from the modern landscape as peaceful and upscale-gated communities.

There is a desire amongst the middle-class respondents for the physical and economic exclusion of the danger and chaos that is associated with migrant workers and poverty. Many respondents expressed discomfort and concern with the idea that migrants only stayed in one place for 2-3 months at a time and felt concern that they were unfamiliar with their backgrounds and family histories. Fu Yang, a 35-year old female make-up artist earning 4,500 RMB (\$720 USD) per month lives in low-income housing that was previously given to her parents as members of a state-owned *danwei*. She says that many of the homeowners moved away from her *danwei* apartment complex to live in better conditions and now rent their homes to migrant workers. Therefore her apartment complex is comprised of a fairly even mix of local Nanjingese and migrant workers. Fu Yang admitted that she was very familiar with the local Nanjing neighbors, as they had lived in the same compound for over 20 years, but she continuously stressed her apprehension with her neighbors who were migrants throughout the interview:

We don't know what kind of people they [migrants] are, or where they are from, and they seem very mixed up [*za*], messy and chaotic [*luanqibazao*]...Because we are close to

1912 [the club district of Nanjing], so there are a lot of those types of people, the ones that work in bars, work at night and sleep during the day, or the street vendors or supermarket workers, you know that type. (Interview with author, May 2013)

Her mistrust and anxiety about the presence of migrant workers on grounds that they are transitory suggests that in this case the poverty of migrant workers is equated with crime. Her anxiety also illustrates the very tangible social stratification that exists between locals and migrants. The modern landscape depends on and is predicated on the cultural and material ways that the landscape of migrants is portrayed as impoverished and dangerous.

The material characteristics of the built environment also play a role in constituting the formation of class. The values of safety, peace, and newness of gated communities are defined as modern and civilized as opposed to the danger, chaos, and “tradition” associated with Old Nanjing. Old Nanjing represents the backward and impoverished in the popular imagination, while the posh shopping malls and skyscrapers represent Nanjing’s future as a global and modern city that exemplifies progress and prosperity. Furthermore, the residents are dissociated with the landscape as the people themselves are often devalued as unsophisticated, while the material aspects of the homes that exemplify tradition are valued for their “pure Chineseness.” In this way, the homes of Old Nanjing are glorified as cultural and historical heritage sites of Chinese traditional untainted by Western influence, which is a crucial and inherent aspect of the construction of urban modernity. In other words, tradition constitutes modernity, the modern/traditional binary is locked in a mutually constitutive relationship—that is, one cannot exist without the other.

C. Representations of Old Nanjing by Residents: Perspectives of Locals and Migrants

In this section, I analyze the personal narratives of the Old Nanjing neighborhood residents, both locals and migrants, that discuss the uncivilized person as associated with the

dilapidated landscape of Old Nanjing. The interview narratives and observations of the material form of Old Nanjing discuss development of the built environment in relation to ideas that equate poverty with backwardness and incivility. These narratives reveal residents' subconscious knowledge that their homes are low in exchange value, but high in use value, and that these residents have conflicting feelings about their neighborhood. For example, many residents despise the material discomforts of their old homes—especially the inconvenience of lacking a personal bathroom—and yet they recognize the ways the neighborhood supports communal living and a mutual exchange of support, describing the ways they cherish the rich public life of sociability and friendships in their neighborhood. Both insiders and outsiders of the neighborhood describe the residents of Old Nanjing as “uncivilized,” categorizing them as backwards, opposing them to modernity, and reinforcing class divisions that are constituted through the built and social environments of Old Nanjing.

Homes in the neighborhood have limited monetary value, and residents are unsure of how much compensation they will receive for their homes when the neighborhood is demolished. Some dread the day, while others eagerly and anxiously anticipate receiving the compensation money. One resident was waiting for her home to be demolished so that her son could get married, and he and his wife could have their own bedroom in a new, government-provided home. The whole family—maternal grandmother, husband and wife, and son—shared one bedroom in the old neighborhood. “I feel quite bad for him [my son]. He and his girlfriend have nowhere to go, if you know what I mean. He still shares a bed with his grandmother. Once our house is demolished, the government will give us enough compensation money for a three-bedroom apartment, it won’t be a problem anymore, and then they can get married” (Chen Li, interview with author, March 2012). Residents with usage or ownership rights (for a discussion

of property rights in post-Mao China, see Hsing 2010) will be compensated for the demolition of their home based on the area of the land that the home occupies. One respondent claimed that compensation may be as high as 6,000 RMB (\$970 USD) per square meter. Many of the homes are around 30-40 square meters (320-430 square feet), which is enough for a standard living room and one bedroom (no bathroom or kitchen). As a result, their homes are worth at most 180,000-240,000 RMB (\$29,000-\$38,500 USD), which is around one-fifth the cost of an average apartment in the city (at least 1 million RMB/\$160,000 USD).

As a result of high rates of demolition and relatively low monetary exchange-value for old homes, the city and the residents rarely invest in home improvement in old neighborhoods. Rural migrant residents, who are renting their places of residence from native Nanjingese owners, will not be compensated. Some interview respondents implied that the reason migrants failed to maintain their homes was because they did not own the homes, and so had no reason to invest time or money into keeping up the neighborhood. According to Smith (2008), this is connected to Marx's conception of the theory of abstract labor value and Lefebvre's production of relative space for exchange value:

This [the progressive universalization of value as the form of abstract labor] involves not just the production of geographical space...but the progressive integration and transformation of absolute spaces [of use value] into relative space [of exchange value]...It is not Einstein...which in the end determine the relativity of geographical space, but the actual process of capital accumulation. (113)

The low exchange-value of the homes signifies that the new, modern economy devalues the "traditional" homes and the lifestyles they support on institutional and practical levels. While these homes have little exchange value, they have high use value. The discussion of the neighborhood's use-value will be expanded upon in the section on everyday practices and local

perspectives, which illustrate the vibrancy of the business districts, cultural heritage practices, and tight-knit community and social life of the neighborhood.

In terms of the material characteristics, the homes of Old Nanjing are crumbling and deteriorated. The walls are falling apart as the cement is chipped, the roofs leak, and many of the residents have rat infestations. The paint is cracked and peeling, and the doors and windows are cracked, drafty, and broken. Often junk and trash is piled in alleys or in homes. A family of three or four will often crowd into a single bedroom on a slab of wood with no mattress. None of the houses have proper heating, toilets, hot water, or showers. Sometimes they have running water through a tap in the alleyway, and so the kitchens are often located outside the home in the alley. Such a dilapidated landscape reinforces the ideas of poverty, backwardness, and chaos associated with Old Nanjing. In this way, class divisions are reflected in and reinforced by the dilapidation of the built environment. Many local residents complain about this material dilapidation, expressing eager anticipation of moving out one day or wishes that the government would help with remodeling efforts.

The central courtyards, communal bathhouses, and outdoor kitchens express in their built form the communal-style of living of the neighborhood, which is characterized by some as traditional or backward, and cherished by others as familiar (*shuxi*), cozy, and comforting (*shufu*). Figure 27 illustrates the material dilapidation, while showing the way the spatial organization of the dwellings support a communal lifestyle. The local residents themselves frequently express shame and embarrassment about the backwardness of their lifestyle, indicating that their homes and way of life are devalued by the city and residents on institutional and practical levels. For example, Auntie Shen, looking perplexed and frowning, said to me: “You know, in China, real estate developers have claimed most places for reconstruction, but

this area [Old Nanjing] has not been demolished yet,” she said indicating that the neighbourhood I had recently moved into was considered by many Chinese to be a slum:

Why would you ever want to live here? Our conditions are so much worse than what you have in America. I’ve seen your houses on television. Heavens! Our houses are so terrible. We don’t even have proper plumbing or a bathroom; we have to go to the public toilet down the alley, which is very inconvenient. I think you should take your research elsewhere. (Shen Yiling, interview with author, October 2011)

In another incident, Grandma Wang, a 75-year old Old Nanjing resident and thrift store owner, said to me, “Our dialect is hard to listen to [*nanting*] and our homes are ugly. We have low *suzhi*, no good conditions [*tiaojian*], no culture [*wenhua*]” (Interview with author, November 2011). I noticed that as time went on and I became more familiar with the neighborhood, my contacts in the area stopped expressing shame in their homes in the way that they did when I first arrived.



Figure 27: A typical dwelling in Old Nanjing may give the false impression to outsiders that its lack of material comforts makes it an undesirable place to live. Source: Photo by author, October 2011.

For some, appearances may imply that the material conditions are uninhabitable. From an outside perspective, Old Nanjing is often portrayed in the popular imagination, especially in the middle-class respondents, as a dangerous, dirty, uncivilized, and chaotic place. The traditional and crowded aspects of the neighborhood appear to be uncomfortable from an outsider’s

perspective, which reinforces the misconceived notion that the residents live in miserable conditions, further constituting the inhabitants as lower class.

In terms of the native Nanjingese resident perspective on contested notions of economic development, only one of twenty-one of the respondents said he was overall satisfied with urban redevelopment projects. Four out of twenty-one said they were overall dissatisfied with urban redevelopment projects because it benefited the rich outsiders and corrupt politicians, while excluding the locals from any social or economic benefits. Sixteen out of twenty-one said they felt a mixture of both good and bad feelings regarding urban redevelopment citing reasons such as improving the overall quality of life, image of the city, and lifting the prosperity of the city residents, but causing inconveniences such as traffic, air pollution, destroying cultural and historical heritage, and causing harm to the local communities, especially those who depend on livelihoods in the city, children, and senior citizens. This reinforces the contested notion that the landscape of modernity is realized through development of the built environment and the landscape of backwardness is manifested in poverty.

The landscape of representation constructed by native Old Nanjing residents involves discourses of Old Nanjing as both a place full of value and devoid of value. Most residents despise the material aspects of their homes, complaining about the inconveniences of the homes especially public toilets. However, most simultaneously express pride in the unique local culture and cherish their life-long neighbors as they would family. The residents of Old Nanjing also described their neighbors—both the local and migrant neighbors—as backward and low inner-quality (*suzhi*). Some respondents specifically associated the residents of Old Nanjing as uncivilized (*bujiang wenming*) and made a connection between the uncivilized characteristics of both built environment and the people living there as conflated with poverty. The behavior that is

deemed uncivilized and practiced in the neighborhood in turn constitutes the landscape as backward and uncivilized. The landscape and class is constituted in a mutually reciprocal relationship through the tension between the new capitalist economy and transformed notions of progress.

As a mother of a 6-year-old girl, Zhu Chongyang, a 40-year old female accountant living in Old Nanjing and earning 5,000 RMB (\$800 USD) per month, is concerned about her child's educational development. Like many Chinese parents, she is deeply preoccupied with her child's future success and her ability to provide monetarily for her child's future. She told me during the interview that she loves the social ties and friendships she holds with her neighbors in Old Nanjing, but admits there is one thing she does not enjoy about the neighborhood:

More migrants mean a more mixed (*za*), and chaotic (*luan*) environment. That's why when people go to buy a house they definitely want to check out the level of their neighbors' quality (*suzhi*) and see if it's a good place to raise a kid. If I could choose, I would swap out (*huan*) the people who live here with more civilized residents. (Interview with author June 7, 2013)

She is concerned that the uncivilized social environment of Old Nanjing will result in her child's poor social and human development, thus affecting the child's future ability to get a job and a husband. Her anxiety indicates that Chinese citizens in today's new capitalist economy are situated between the dichotomies of wealthy, educated, and civilized in opposition with the poverty and backwardness of migrants. Such ideas further exacerbate the social stratification and class formations of the poor and middle-class. The landscape of Old Nanjing reinforces these notions as poor migrants and locals alike navigate the struggles and experience the cultural practices of everyday life.

Many Old Nanjing local resident respondents were conflicted about the perceptions of the neighborhood being depicted as a dilapidated slum. One of my neighbors and key informants, a

36-year old male construction contractor earning 1,000 RMB (\$160 USD) per month and native to Old Nanjing, explained to me one day:

Its [Old Nanjing's] architectural structure is different from other contemporary places. But this place actually isn't a slum, not a slum the way America has slums anyway. The people that live here don't have the same thinking (*gainian*) of other people that live in slums. Poor people live here, but the people that live here have connections to this place from their ancestors (*zubei*). (Guo Yifan, interview with author, June 2013)

Almost all local respondents agreed that they cared very deeply for their neighbors as they would a family member, and stated that their favorite thing about the neighborhood were the friendships with their neighbors. Residents would frequently discuss experiences they had or had heard about from relatives about the isolation and loneliness of high-rise apartment buildings, where neighbors rarely even say hello. They would often express extreme trepidation about being demolished for the reason that they would be displaced into an apartment, which they described as isolated, unfriendly, and lonely. Gao Fei, a 37-year old male construction worker living in Old Nanjing, related:

If they [my neighbors] have a place that is better, then of course they are not going to be willing to live here [in Old Nanjing], because you know how it's so inconvenient to go to the bathroom, and the rats... But we like the people. I'm willing to live here as a young person because with the way my family's [economic] situation is right now, it's appropriate to live here. Old Nanjing is a really deep and concrete cultural place, and the interpersonal relationships are more harmonious than living in a high-rise or an apartment complex [*xiaoqu*]. Also, people live here long term, my neighbors and I go way back, to the time we were kids, and our homes have emotion, feeling [*ganqing*]. Although the living environment isn't very good, but I still would be quite reluctant to leave [*liulian*] this place" (Gao Fei, interview with author, May 2013).

As a result, old homes have little to none exchange-value, though the homes still have use-value as providing a community of support. The land, being located close to the city center, does have high potential land-rent prices. If demolished, the area would provide exchange value for the government and the developers.

The rumored social environment of the apartment building marks a contrast with the neighborly relations of Old Nanjing, where residents would share meals or eat together, help each other with the laundry, or babysit for one another's families. These practices indicate strong familial bonds between the local residents and the residents recognized that these practices were unique to the neighborhood. The following interview with a 68-year old male state-owned enterprise (SOE) retiree is a typical perspective of a local Nanjingese resident:

The thing I'm most satisfied with this place is that the relationships with the neighbors are very harmonious, in the Nanjing dialect, we say, "*Lingju hao, Saijinbao*," which means good neighborly relations are more precious than gold. If you live in one of those new apartments, you won't have good relationships with your neighbors. The big doors open and close, but "you don't know me, I don't know you..." Not like us here in Old Nanjing, when we see each other, we chat and our relations are very harmonious. The thing I don't like about Old Nanjing is that the conditions (*tiaojian*) are very poor (*cha*), dirty, chaotic, and poor. The people who live here have low quality (*suzhi*) and it needs to be raised. It would be better if our cultural level could be raised a little bit"(Hou Bo, interview with author, June 5, 2013).

Hou Bo's articulation of a common saying, "good neighborly relations are more precious than gold," recounts a phrase that challenges definitions of value based on capitalist monetary value based on the exchange value of gold. Hou Bo's opinion reflects the majority opinion of Old Nanjing residents, who often expressed anxiety and apprehension about demolition as they knew their neighbors would be separated and they would have to live in the isolation of apartment complexes. One 60-year old female SOE retiree and native resident of Old Nanjing said:

This neighborhood has a relatively domestic (*shenghuo*) lifestyle. Sure you might have a more modern feeling in a big apartment building, but you don't feel as connected to your life. It's easier to get close (*jiejin*) here. In an apartment building you might say hi to other people, but you still separate each other in your heart, but here there is a more neighborly feeling. (Yang Shuxia, June 10, 2013)

These fears suggest that the landscape of Old Nanjing is a contested site of urban modernity, as people cherish the social relations but despise the physical conditions.

In conclusion, the locals have a love-hate relationship with their neighborhood. While they describe their neighbors as “like family to me,” they also describe the people of Nanjing, both the locals and the migrants, as displaying low *suzhi*. Meanwhile, they complain about the poor material conditions of the neighborhood, while expressing appreciation for neighbors, especially in relations to systems of mutual exchange of support, especially cooking, doing laundry, and babysitting. Many locals complained that the migrants did not take care of their community (e.g., littering, creating a disturbance at night) because they were not invested long-term in the community having plans to return home. The various reactions and perceptions of the neighborhood’s existence demonstrate that the experience of demolition is highly differentiated. The neighborhood of Old Nanjing is caught in the middle of a contest between the progress of modernity and preservation of tradition through the practice of demolition and the representation of preservation.

Rural migrants, on the other hand, saw city development as a path toward convenience, progress, and prosperity, but some associated the backwardness of the old city as a sign of the laziness of the local Nanjingese. Indeed, many of the rural migrant residents reported feeling as though Old Nanjing reminded them of village life. Ten out of 20 migrants said they were satisfied with urban redevelopment projects in Nanjing. Five out of 20 said they didn’t know or they had no opinion. Five out of 20 said there were both good and bad effects, including pollution, traffic, and social unrest. These conflicting responses indicate that the rural migrant experience in Old Nanjing was highly variable. Indeed, while some rural migrants quickly made friends with the locals and were welcomed into the community, others were excluded.

Some migrants associated the dilapidated landscape of Old Nanjing with backwardness and laziness. Although Li Jianhua, a migrant living in Old Nanjing for 8 years, admitted that life

in the city was much more convenient than life in the countryside, he complained when describing Old Nanjing:

The thing that needs to be improved is that this place [Old Nanjing] is relatively old and broken (*pojiu*). This place really needs to get some new houses. The houses here are terrible and the conditions are quite poor and backward. The city development here is quite slow, it's almost as if there isn't any change at all, it's as if this city isn't even trying to progress. The Nanjingese are not okay, they don't have any creative spirit, no drive for entrepreneurialism (*chuangye jinshen*)” (Interview with author, June 5, 2013).

While migrants' experiences in the city are highly variable, Li Jianhua's words reflect the common stereotype that local Nanjingese people are lazy. Li Jianhua uses the poor conditions of the houses in Old Nanjing as evidence of laziness and backwardness. For example, consider the following responses from interviews with two migrant workers. Cao Li is a 44-year old female migrant worker and second-hand clothing shop owner. She used to be a massage therapist and traveled all around the country, and even travelled to Singapore once, working as a massage therapist:

The government should pay more attention to the way the city looks and beautify the city, make it nice to look at. The environment is not very clean or hygienic. They should put more money and effort into street cleaning. The government should think about this more carefully and work harder to save effort (*shengjin*) and be more efficient...The government should be more like Singapore and be stronger, especially give higher and stronger fines for the people who litter. The environment is much better in Singapore, it's much cleaner. (Interview with author, June 2013)

Her opinion reflects the common sentiment among migrant workers that the government should take a more direct role in regulating and encouraging the beautification of the built environment. Zhang Le, a 52-year old male rural migrant and restaurant owner who has lived in Nanjing for over 20 years told me in response to the question “what are the results of urban renewal in Nanjing?”,

Nanjing has seen a huge change in the last 10 years or so. Now, the houses are tall, the streets are wide, and the air is polluted. Yes, I'm quite satisfied with it, I think it's been quite good so far because everyone's conditions (*tiaojian*) of life have improved quite

drastically, just everything has improved in everyone's life, like the houses themselves are much better now and there is better hygiene, and roads. I think there are only good things about demolition. Demolition takes old houses and makes them new, isn't that a good thing? How could that not be a good thing? There is not one bad thing about it, as long as the history is preserved, only good things can come from this type of housing and economic development. (Interview with author, 2013)

This type of generalization was common and illustrates the ways in which the built environment constitutes the making of class identity defined as uncivilized and backward as opposed to modern and progressive.

D. Practices of Eviction and Demolition in Old Nanjing by the Nanjing City Government

The representations that portray Old Nanjing as an obstacle to further economic development make them ideal sites for razing and renewal. Furthering negative representations of Old Nanjing is crucial to advancing officials' agendas to demolish old cities in order to make way for construction of malls and skyscrapers. Although Old Nanjing has technically been deemed a cultural and historical preservation site in the urban planning exhibition hall, many buildings in Old Nanjing are nevertheless being demolished or at least under constant threat of being demolished. Figure 28 shows one row of businesses that were evicted shortly before I arrived in May 2013. I was quite shocked to see this section already evicted and demolished as it was a bustling business district of various shops and merchants when I lived there in 2011-2012. The red banner with yellow characters in figure 28 declares, "Earnestly carry out and implement 'State-Owned Land and Housing Fine and Compensation Regulations,' [a policy that] protects and maintains the legal rights and benefits of those that have gotten fined." This banner and other posters pasted around the area (see figures 28, 33, and 34) indicate that there has been some resistance to the eviction of these businesses, or at least that government officials are anxious and highly aware of the possibility of resistance. Although I myself did not witness any protests or physical and visible public forms of open resistance during my fieldwork, other cities in China

did experience residents petitioning the national government or refusing to leave their homes (see Hsing 2010; Hsing and Lee 2010). Two of my research respondents said they would protest if they were not given adequate compensation money when the time came to be evicted.



Figure 28: Photo of Demolition Practices: This area was a busy street and bustling business district in 2012; I was surprised to find these businesses evicted and demolition markings covering this area of Old Nanjing when I returned in May 2013. A supermart similar to Walmart was flourishing in the lot behind me as I took the photo. The red banner with yellow characters declares, “Earnestly carry out and implement ‘State-Owned Land and Housing Fine and Compensation Regulations,’ [a policy that] protects and maintains the legal rights and benefits of those that have gotten fined.” *Source:* Photo by author, May 2013.

According to my research respondents a majority of what was once called the “southern city” (*chengnan*), the neighborhood that had once encompassed Old Nanjing, had already been demolished to make way for schools and apartment buildings by the time I first visited in 2010. Figure 29 depicts the entire area I consider to be my field site; the arbitrary boundaries of “Old Nanjing” as the space I have bounded for the purpose of this thesis. Other old city neighborhoods surround this area and are scattered around the city and beyond. The scale of demolition beyond this map is outside the limits of this thesis as reliable data is difficult to obtain. I therefore focus my concern on the area depicted in this map, as that is where I lived and conducted my fieldwork for the past three years.

During my time visiting and living in Old Nanjing periodically from 2010-2013, about one-third of the homes and businesses in my field site were evicted, gutted, and demolished (labeled as section C in figure 29). Figure 29 is satellite imagery from Google Maps on March 17, 2014 showing the aftermath of the entire demolition of section C. Demolition of this area began in 2011 and was completed by summer of 2013 (see figures 30 and 31). Approximately 700 square meters of land comprising my field site, about 200 square meters was demolished and 500 square meters were preserved since 2010. While the remaining two-thirds appears well-protected for now and the residents face seemingly little threat (labeled as sections A and B), everyone admits that they plan for their homes to be demolished eventually, but nobody had any idea when that will occur. While some said, “I guess a year or two,” others insisted they had no idea, “we’ll wait and see what the government decides,” they told me. Although sections A and B seem to be preserved under conservation of cultural and historical heritage mandates, residents expect to move out eventually, though they don’t know when.



Figure 29: Satellite Image of Demolition in Field Site: The area in the red circle (section C) is the plot of land, mostly residential, that was demolished in 2012. This satellite image can be viewed at your leisure at <https://goo.gl/maps/ICSgf>. The map of Old Nanjing with GPS tracks in chapter 3 is a map of section A only.

Here are some on-the-ground pictures of the demolition in section C.



Figure 30: Before the demolition in section C, February 2012. Source: Photo by author, February 2012.



Figure 31: After the demolition in section C in July 2013. Source: Photo by author, July 2013.

When I was conducting research in Old Nanjing in 2011-2012, big red characters reading *banqian*, or “evict and relocate” and *chai*, or “demolish,” were spray painted on the outside of all of the homes in section C. Propaganda, eviction markings, and posters also covered many of the buildings. The remaining residents, however, have not been given notice of compensation or

official orders to move out yet. Torn and faded posters around the neighborhood read, “The Earlier You Move Out, The More Rewards You Will Get” and “Cast Away Illusion and Make Practical Negotiations.” Residents say the posters were put up in 2008, but no one forced them to move out until 2012 (see figure 32).



Figure 32: Eviction Markings: These red characters read “ban qian,” meaning “evict and relocate.” This house was located in section C and the residents were under constant threat of demolition for four years until they were finally evicted in 2012. *Source:* Photo by author, February 2012.

These efforts to improve the built environment through slum clearing efforts reflect the city government’s goal to achieve urban modernity demonstrated in new construction projects. Other posters pasted on homes in section C read, “Expedite Construction, Bring Benefit to the People, Take the Interests of the Whole into Account, Develop Together” (see figure 33). So far, the remaining residents in sections A and B have been spared this propaganda, posters, and spray-painted demolition markings thus far.



Figure 33: A house in section C with numerous colorful posters and banners urging residents to leave peacefully. *Source:* Photo by author, February 2012.

When I returned in May 2013, more demolition had occurred in some other areas. Posters pasted on the houses and buildings contained various slogans, including those in figure 34, declaring: “Improve the quality of the people’s living environment and build a livable and happy district. Keep operations transparent and strengthen the supervision. Manage strictly, urge actively, govern honestly, and build. Support integrative and standardized government policies. Legal, public, and fair penalties and fines” (propaganda posters in Old Nanjing, recorded on May 24, 2013). Figure 34 depicts that demolition has been continuing in Old Nanjing through the summer of 2013.



Figure 34: Demolition and eviction markings and posters urging residents to accept compensation packages without resistance. *Source:* photo by author, May 2013.

Furthermore, a notice pasted on the sides of some homes and businesses being demolished was titled, “A Letter to the Residents that were Fined Based on the Program to Renovate the Dangerous and Old Houses on Zhixi Road.” The letter tells residents:

Respected Resident who has been fined: The program to renovate the dangerous and old houses on this plot of land is a key project of the city government. The purpose of this morale-boosting project is to improve the living environment for the benefit of our offspring and future generations. Since this project was first implemented, the program has obtained the vigorous support of a vast majority of the residents. More than 40% of the inhabitants have already reached an agreement with the government and have been evicted. At this point, we still have a portion of the residents that have entertained notions that do not correspond with reality. They ask for sky-high prices (*mantian yaojia*), while

they wait and survey the situation with hope. We once again earnestly inform you of the following rules and regulations regarding demolition and eviction. (letter seen in Old Nanjing, May 2013)

The letter outlines the rules and regulations of how to comply with the eviction policy and how to avoid getting fined by moving out within a certain period of time, and stating the rights and responsibilities of residents getting evicted and the government for being able to evict (see appendix C for the Chinese version). This letter is an example of insecurity in response to contesting power relations of the state. At least half of the residents have not reached compensation agreements yet, which indicates open resistance to the state's agenda.

These examples represent a contested urban modernity as their urgency reveals the insecurity of the city government of potential resistance by residents to their slum clearing efforts. A few residents have recently (within the past year) invested in renovating their homes, such as adding a second floor or adding showers and toilets. A few of the neighbors told me that they added a second floor to their homes because it adds more square meters to their home, meaning that they will be compensated more once they are demolished. At least twenty homes have been converted their homes into restaurants, convenience stores, and thrift shops and are not planning on being demolished in the foreseeable future (see figure 35).



Figure 35: A home in section A of Old Nanjing has been converted into a cigarette and alcohol shop. Many of the homes sell second-hand clothing or other small conveniences, such as beer or ice cream. The continuing establishment of businesses in Old Nanjing signifies that the business owners and investors are not planning on being demolished in the near future. *Source:* Photo by author, October 2011.

E. Everyday Practices: Contesting Urban Modernity and Rural Backwardness

I understand practices in Old Nanjing (e.g., card playing, prostitution, and business in the street) as constitutive of class formations. Everyday practices in the streets of Old Nanjing illustrate contested urban modernities and class making. For example, the low-income housing also supports rural migrants, who supply the “modern” city with cheap labor. I will first discuss the practices considered “uncivilized” or morally degenerate, including waste-picking, prostitution, gambling, and selling second-hand clothing. I will second describe the practices that are considered “traditional.” One common practice of rural migrant workers in the neighborhood was recycling and waste picking (see figure 36). The cleaners of the city are considered backwards by the local urban interview respondents, while it is the cleanliness they enable through their cheap labor that grants the city its mark of modernity. Even though the migrant workers actually constitute the modern city by providing cheap labor markets, including street cleaners, informal recycling workers, and waste pickers, they are seen as the opposite of modern

(Brown 2013). The everyday practices of the people of Old Nanjing challenge the image of modernity that the aspiring global city of Nanjing is seeking to achieve (Kloet and Scheen 2013). In these cases, the people are divorced from the landscape as their practices are deemed either “uncivilized” or “traditional,” while the material homes of the landscape are considered a “cultural revitalization” district by the city government.



Figure 36: A typical practice for rural migrants living in Nanjing is waste picking. Here one of my research respondents picks through some materials to judge its appropriateness for recycling. This man, Gao Li, makes his living on recycling scrap and waste he collects around the area. *Source:* Photo by author, October 2011.

Prostitution, sex toy, and pornography shops were also common business ventures in Old Nanjing, which further reinforced outsiders’ perceptions of it as a “morally degenerate” place. For example, on one street in the neighborhood, pink and red lights shine behind white curtains that advertise “health preserving massage” (*baojian anmo*), a common euphemism for brothels. During the day, especially in the scorching summer time heat, young women approximately 18 to 20 years old can be seen lounging in these “massage parlors” wearing suggestive pajamas (e.g., tank tops and shorts) and playing cards with each other as they wait for clients. The illegal activity of prostitution and selling pornography exemplifies the ways in which the residents of Old Nanjing contest power relations and ignore the rules of the state. The everyday practices common in Old Nanjing indicate that the cultural landscape of the social and built environment were mutually constitutive of class formation, especially playing mahjong, which is associated with gambling and therefore is illegal (see figure 37).



Figure 37: Mahjong is often associated with gambling as an illegal and immoral activity. Although mahjong is a common activity and is considered to be a traditional Chinese activity, when it is associated with gambling, it is seen as lower class. *Source:* Photo by author, October 2011.

Another practice that was considered

“uncivilized,” especially by the local residents of Old

Nanjing, were the thrift shops that occupied at least one-third of the homes in section A. When I told one of my research participants that I wanted to interview some of the business owners, he said, “Whatever for? The owners of those ratty businesses don’t represent Old Nanjing culture. They are backward and uncultured, you have no business interviewing them.” However, I found the bargaining culture of the second-hand clothing stores fascinating. I often sat with Grandma Wang outside her business to chat with her and the frequent passersby, frequently observing her bargaining techniques. See figure 38 for a picture of Grandma Wang’s shop.



Figure 38: Grandma Wang's thrift store. *Source:* Photo by author, October 2011.

Grandma Wang often emphatically tried to convince her customers of the high quality of the clothing, while her customers

asked for a lower price by pointing out how something was dirty or broken. Similar to Hanser’s (2008) study, service workers display their expertise and knowledge over their customers, wielding power over their customers. When I returned in summer 2013, she often complained to me that people were asking for lower prices and that she was getting fewer customers as people

more frequently wanted to buy new clothes instead of second-hand ones as the economy prospered.

The business practices associated with the thrift shops also exemplified social stratification, as the customers often portrayed themselves as higher class than the shop owners. One day the socioeconomic disparity was made particularly obvious to me. Grandma Wang and I were talking about her children when suddenly she looked at me straight in the eye as tears streamed down her face. “If you have money, life is good. But if you aren’t cultured, you can’t read and write, then you have to do business like this, business that doesn’t make any money, even as a 75-year-old woman like me,” she said, pointing to her second-hand clothing shop:

If you are poor, you cannot give good circumstances (*tiaojian*) to your kids. They end up with little education, and then they are stuck doing the same thing that you do, business that doesn’t make any money. It is the worst feeling in the world to realize that you can’t give your kids the life they deserve and the life you want to give them because you don’t have the *tiaojian* to help them. I’m not willing to be a burden on my son, so I opened this shop so that I could take care of myself. (Interview with author, February 2012)

As she spoke, a group of three men and two women walked out of her shop with crinkled noses exclaiming loudly for everyone around to hear, “That store smells! And the clothing is so ugly!” The men wore matching suits and red shoes that looked out of place. The women had plastic water bottles, heavy make-up, tight jeans, and high-heels and looked like foreign tourists in the old city neighborhood. The association of the business owners in Old Nanjing as lower class and the visible social stratification between the service worker and consumer illustrated class formations in the neighborhood.

The other practices that I frequently witnessed in the neighborhood were not considered to be “uncivilized,” but rather more “traditional,” such as Chinese chess, drinking tea and smoking, cooking in outdoor kitchens, fishing, sitting around and chatting, walking birds in their

cages, mahjong, preparing and cleaning vegetables for an upcoming meal, and selling trinkets.

These practices created a unique cultural landscape in Old Nanjing (see figure 39).



Figure 39: Playing Chinese chess, drinking tea, and smoking are common cultural practices among men in Old Nanjing.
Source: Photo by author, October 2011.

These everyday practices of Old Nanjing are described by respondents as “uncivilized,” “traditional”, or “stuck in

the past.” When I asked the long-time residents during my interviews, “What has changed in this neighborhood during the last 30 years?” five of them responded with the phrase, “nothing has changed.” Indeed, for many people nothing has changed in terms of way of life or daily experience as residents still use communal bathrooms, showers, kitchens, and courtyards. Walking into the neighborhood, one had the feeling of stepping back in time about 50 years—dinner was cooked on outdoor make shift coal stoves, chickens walked freely around the streets, pet pigeons cooed. This gave a feeling of rural, village life. A crowd of at least 10 adult men stood surrounding mahjong, card, and Chinese chess tables, and children and adults alike walked in and out of their neighbors’ homes freely. These are considered by some in the city to be “traditional” Chinese practices because such habits are rarely observed in gated communities or high-rise apartments. Figure 40 illustrates a common practice in Old Nanjing, sitting and chatting in the street. This type of practice is almost completely eradicated in gated communities and the newly developed parts of the city.



Figure 40: Common practices in Old Nanjing, such as sitting around and chatting with tea and caged pet birds, are constitutive of the cultural landscape. *Source:* Photo by author, October 2011.

Old Nanjing is more than just a site of cultural heritage because it is also still a site full of young families, children, parents,

and grandparents that is being used to support social reproduction and livelihoods. The houses are cozy, and nobody complained about sharing a bedroom with their family. My neighbors often held lively parties with their friends that spilled out onto the street. The lack of personal bathroom allowed for a communal way of living and socializing in the public bathhouses. Residents described their neighbors and friends as close as family. The lack of running water inside meant that kitchens were located outside, and the smell of delicious food being cooked wafted through the air every day at noon and 5 pm. The landscape allowed for a communal way of living that supported a tight-knit community, and also provided a relatively good security system of watchful eyes. The neighborhood was extremely lively and active, especially during the synchronized street dance at 7 pm every evening, a common activity for middle-aged and older women in urban China. Old Nanjing was not a dead and deteriorating community, but actually a thriving business district and lively neighborhood and community of strong cultural and social networks. Because Old Nanjing seemed on the outside to be crumbling and deteriorating, it was represented in the imagination of some and official discourse as an opposition against modernity. In reality it was a thriving and vibrant community of families and businesses that exemplified a contested urban modernity.

IV. Conclusion

In this chapter, I employ ethnographic methods to examine the cultural landscape of dilapidated homes and impoverished residents in Old Nanjing. Building from interviews, conversations, observations, and government notices, I find that various actors located inside and outside of Old Nanjing construct categories of “civilized” and “uncivilized” spaces of the city based on certain representations and practices associated with contested notions of modernity. I argue that city residents’ application of these categories reinforces social divisions in the built and social environment. The “preservation by bulldozer” tactics of the government indicate the valuation of the “traditional” landscape as constitutive of modernity, while dismissing the residents of the neighborhood as “uncivilized” or “morally degenerate,” because perhaps the residents are not sophisticated enough to fully appreciate the material value of their traditional homes. In other words, the people are separated from the material landscape in the construction of the modern/tradition binary.

The socially constructed binary between the modern and the backward is manifested in various forms in urban China. The contrast between the modern and traditional is often described in popular media, political rhetoric, and government propaganda in the following patterned binaries: progressive and backward; new and old; orderly and chaotic; clean and dirty; rich and poor; hard working and lazy; civilized and uncivilized; high quality and low quality; urban and rural; and native and migrant. The binary between the modern and traditional is also manifested in the built environment in various ways. The sections of Nanjing defined in the popular imagination as modern are gated communities or large shopping malls characterized as harmonious (*hexie*) and civilized (*wenming*). Meanwhile, backwardness is viewed as the chaotic (*luan*) and uncivilized old city neighborhoods, sometimes referred to as “dangerous slums.”

Furthermore, “civilized” behavior, defined by many research participants as lining up, paying attention to traffic signals, speaking standard Mandarin, or throwing away trash, are often attributed to local urban residents. In practice, of course, urbanites do not necessarily practice these behaviors. Rural migrants, on the other hand, stereotypically display “uncivilized” behavior, defined by locals and migrants alike as spitting, jaywalking, littering, wearing pajamas in public, or swearing. Although these behaviors are attributed to rural migrants, they do not necessarily practice these habits either (see chapter 4). Notions of modernity and civility are thus highly contested and diverse.

This chapter highlights the ways in which the cultural landscape is dynamic and how definitions of urban modernity are inherently unstable (Dibazar et al. 2013). Following Lefebvre (1991), an examination of the material and symbolic forms of space, and the insider and outsider perspective of the landscape through representation and practice, illustrate highly differentiated notions of urban modernity. The data illustrate the mutually constitutive relationship between spatial production, everyday practice, and social formation by showing how class is related to the built environment. I agree with L. Zhang (2010) that the categories of the “uncivilized” and “civilized” are reflected on the built environment. For example, the material dilapidation of homes in Old Nanjing contributes to the social construction of the neighborhood and its residents as “uncivilized.” Such material inequalities in the built environment as rearticulated under the new capitalist economy constitute the inhabitants as lower class. Meanwhile, the everyday practices common in Old Nanjing were deemed “uncivilized” by outsiders, furthering the reflection of class divisions in the social environment through everyday practice. Old Nanjing exemplifies a contested modernity because despite the stereotypes of Old Nanjing as backward and uncivilized, many aspects of the neighborhood itself, such as its ability to provide low-

income housing for cheap laborers that clean the streets and collect garbage, are constitutive of the clean, modern, and orderly city that officials hope to achieve (Pow 2007). Furthermore, the perspectives of the local residents themselves exemplified Old Nanjing not as a dilapidated slum, but rather as a thriving business district and tight-knit community. In conclusion, the modern/backward binary is constituted in the built and social environment and constructs categories of civilized and uncivilized urban inhabitants through representation and practice that reinforce class divisions. In the context of transitioning to a market economy, class divisions are changing rapidly, and therefore are more obvious and easier to read in the landscape than Lefebvre suggests. I argue that the modern/backward binary is contested through the diverse experiences and practices of the local residents of Old Nanjing.

CHAPTER 6

STATE, MARKET, AND SOCIETY IN URBAN CHINA: THE PRIVATIZATION OF HOMEOWNERSHIP AND THE FORMATION OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

I. Introduction

While in the previous chapter I recounted experiences in an intimate community with a vibrant street life, in this chapter I describe the less-socially active life in various types of apartment buildings. Although the apartments were often described by those both *inside and outside* of the communities as lonely and isolating, I stress here that my respondents reported a wide diversity of experiences ranging from “dead and isolating” to “safe and peaceful.” There was a significant difference between those living in gated communities and those living in *danwei* apartments. This difference will be explored in more detail later in the chapter. The flourishing public sociability and communal lifestyle of Old Nanjing compared to the individualism of separate condos illustrates a profound shift in lifestyle practices under economic reform. Indeed, the pervasive political-economic transition of “opening up and reform” (*gaige kaifang*) resulted in far-reaching material and social changes (Rofel 2007). Moving from a theoretically egalitarian to an evidently inequitable society was one of the most striking developments in urban China during the last 30 years (Anagnost 2008).

The shift from “socialism” to “capitalism” has been made most obvious through the process of conversion from state-provided housing to commercialized housing (see figures 41 and 42), which has resulted in extreme housing inequality and the popularization of exclusionary

gated communities. Following L. Zhang (2010) and Hsing (2010), I use the term “commercialized housing” rather than “privatized housing” because the housing market is a hybrid of state control and free-market capital. The market is neither completely privatized nor totally state-controlled. State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), public developers, and private businesses are actively engaged in property development in China. Housing is also not wholly “privately-owned” because homes are bought and owned on 70- to 90-year leases. A new law passed in 2007 recognizes the legal status and protection of private property. I examine a case study of apartment building residents to show that the impacts of economic reform as manifested in changes in the built environment affects the lived experience and practices of socialization.



Figure 41: Typical danwei housing, built in the 1980s. Rent for a 2-bedroom apartment here costs around 1,000 RMB/\$160 USD per month. Source: photo by author, July 2013.



Figure 42: A high-security and upscale, gated community in the suburbs of Nanjing equipped with indoor and outdoor swimming pools, tennis courts, and a private-management company (*wuye guanli*) responsible for security, mail, and trash services. A typical apartment in this community costs around 5,000 RMB (US\$824) per month, about five times more than a typical apartment in the city. *Source*: Photo by author, May 2013.

The complexity of the state-market relationship in urban China has been well documented (see chapter 1), and I contribute to the existing literature by adding the social and qualitative component of how broader structural changes are affecting the lived experience of common citizens. I am interested in how ruptures in Mao-era conceptions of the state and market caused changes in ideas of public (i.e. communal) and private (i.e. individual) life. While people moved towards living more private lives, the built environment changed to accommodate these lifestyle changes, such as building single-family condos, separate toilets, and individual showers. Meanwhile, the proliferation of high-rise apartment buildings were catalyzed by state and capital interests in the commodification of land and housing markets, which also encouraged more private and individual lifestyles. Perhaps most important, the popularization of new apartment buildings featuring “modern” amenities such as dishwashers, wireless internet and air conditioning, were fueled by a rising demand for certain material comforts witnessed through

and encouraged by the more apparent and growing elite class in China, as well as access to American televisions shows and movies featuring luxury homes (Wang 2005, 2010).

Class aspiration is an important part of Chinese culture and the growing demand of new housing complexes—that is, buying an apartment with multiple rooms, private bathrooms, and a modern kitchen is an important marker of success (Wang 2010). The transformations of public life and sociability caused and were caused by changes in the built environment that encouraged more individual and private lifestyles, as well as the growing demand for such homes. In other words, the production of new housing engaged in a mutually constitutive relationship with growing notions of individualism. In this I follow Ong and L. Zhang (2008) who write:

we challenge the Chinese discourse on privatization as limited to market activities. Instead we view privatization as a set of techniques that optimize economic gains by priming the powers of the private self... We view privatization as a process that both produces free-floating values of self-interest and allows them to proliferate in daily life.
(3)

The privatization of daily life, not just in the marketplace, but also in the “privatization of the self” is manifested through new housing preferences. In short, not only did the spatial production of new housing *supply* allow for the constitution of the new middle classes as a social group, but also the growing *demand* for new material comforts and the *aspiring* middle classes fueled this spatial production. This process describes the mutual constitutive relationship between the new middle classes and the new, gated communities. It is not simply that the built environment produces class differences, but that class differences (differences in both “taste” and financial resources) produce a variegated built environment.

In contextualizing this case study within the changing economic climate from communal and socialist to private and capitalist, thinking about the public/private divide is useful in understanding the changes brought about through new ideas of modernity: “The contrast between

the ‘personal’...and the impersonal...is in fact widely experienced...as one of the great divides of modern life. But historically these two poles [public and private] emerge together; and the sharpness of the split between them is one of the defining characteristics of modernity” (Weintraub 1997, 20-21). The aim of this chapter is to examine the ways in which privatization in its various forms has transformed social life in urban China.

The data show both positive and negative aspects to these lifestyle changes. For example, many of my respondents described the benefits of privatization and modernity, especially the increased availability of food and material comforts (e.g., personal toilets and reliable electricity). The same respondents usually expressed nostalgia for certain aspects of the Mao era and complained about the loneliness and isolation of individual condo life. My initial experience hearing these stories left me wondering whether or not the economic reform largely benefitted or harmed the majority of the population. This question encouraged me to delve deeper into the ways in which life has changed since economic reform began over 30 years ago. It is thus useful to compare the lived experience of Old Nanjing, which retains some aspects of the customs and lifestyles of the past (e.g., public life and social contact in the street), and life in various types of apartment buildings, some of which retain aspects of life under the *danwei* socialist system during the Mao-era.²⁶

My research questions reflect the importance of political-economic structures in daily life and how contentious political issues have individual effects on the local level. I ask the questions: How do various city residents perceive condos with private management companies versus public housing units? How has public and social life changed along with changing notions

²⁶ The *danwei* apartments in which I conducted my research were built in the 1980s. These apartments were distinguished from the “commercialized housing” in a few major ways: they did not have management companies (*wuye guanli*), their owners bought them as over 75% subsidized by the state, they were built over twenty years ago, they were not gated, and they had sizable (at least 50%) migrant populations living there.

of individualism in the new “capitalist” economy? How are the emerging middle-classes formed and taking on various identities through transforming notions of private property ownership and high housing prices? I show through an analysis of everyday life of apartment building residents that the emerging state mode of production in urban China—which produces high-rise apartment buildings geared toward private homeownership—is transforming social relations. The new social relations are illustrated through new conceptions of private property, safety, neighborly relations, and perceptions of future prospects for their children.

In this chapter, I first outline a literature review on gated communities and the middle-class. I then briefly establish a theoretical framework drawing on Lefebvre to establish my understanding of the state mode of production in producing abstract space through private property and its resulting fragmentations and homogenizations. Finally, I present an ethnographic case study of the middle classes in Nanjing, China. The ethnography is separated into two parts: first, the socioeconomic disparity and contestation over urban space as exemplified in the differences between public and private housing. Second, I discuss some of the primary concerns of my middle-class research participants: the burden of skyrocketing housing prices, pressure for their child’s future success, and the stress of being able to provide for the family. I conclude that the recent proliferation of private homeownership has created new class formations constituted in the uneven development of housing.

II. The Middle Classes and Gated Communities: Exclusion, Privilege, and Morality

I am using the United States as a comparative model because there is a long tradition of U.S. based research investigating the effects of gated communities on society (for example, see the studies by Y. Zhang and Fang 2004 and Madrazo and Kempen 2012 that compare urban processes in the U.S. and China). Much of the U.S. based literature discusses the perceived

disadvantages of gated communities, including: exclusion, segregation, and loss of public and social life (Blakely and Snyder 1999; N. Duncan and Duncan 2003).

The critical urban planning literature in the U.S. traces its roots to Jane Jacobs' (1961) searing critiques of scientific and technical planning practices of her time. Old Nanjing is the kind of city that Jacobs (1961) envisions will emerge out of organic social processes of diversity and "sidewalk contacts." Sociability is defined as the frequency of vibrant and lively interactions between various people located in a given place. Based on her experiences in Greenwich Village, NYC, and other U.S. cities, Jacobs (1961) defines public life as sociability in the following ways: diversity as agreeable and amiable; life in the sidewalks and streets; disorderly; and sociability among strangers. For Jacobs, public life is not about political participation or collective action, but instead about the spontaneity and sociability that arises from the interaction of heterogeneous individuals, which is of key importance in sustaining life in the street. Some of her policy prescriptions include encouraging the use of sidewalks as nodes of contact and security:

The tolerance, the room for great differences among neighbors...are possible and normal only when streets of great cities have built-in equipment allowing strangers to dwell in peace together on civilized but essentially dignified and reserved terms. Lowly, unpurposeful and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow. (Jacobs 1961, 72)

Despite the prevalence of Jacobs' ideas in the theoretical urban planning literature, the proliferation of gated communities in the U.S. continues. The popularization of single-family homes in the suburbs reflects purchasing power dynamics and lifestyle preferences of the wealthy classes, which perpetuates the existence of these communities despite their recorded failures and reflects the cultural hegemony of the elite classes. In Old Nanjing the life of the street is absolutely crucial to that community's social relations, and the loss of street life in other

areas of Nanjing due to the proliferation of high-rise apartment buildings is described in this chapter.

While the current Chinese trajectory of urban development does not generally follow the Western literature inspired by Jacobs, Old Nanjing exemplifies the kind of city Jacobs (1961) describes:

Under the seeming disorder of the old city, wherever the old city is working successfully, is a marvelous order for maintaining the safety of the streets and the freedom of the city. It is a complex order. Its essence is intricacy of sidewalk use, bringing with it a constant succession of eyes. (50)

In defining public life as sociability, Old Nanjing serves as an example, while gated communities in China, including those described in this chapter, serve as the counter-example to public sociability.

Lefebvre (1991) draws on Jacobs' work in *The Production of Space*, "She [Jacobs]...very forcefully demonstrate[d] how destructive this [abstract] space can be, and specifically how urban space, using the very means apparently intended to create or re-create it, effects its own self-destruction" (364). Lefebvre then goes on to describe how Jacobs' work invoked a need for "participatory" and "advocacy" planning in urban policy circles. Lefebvre (1991, 364) describes the participatory planning process as a failure because it was the work of capitalism co-opting liberal democratic institutions in order for capitalism to re-appropriate the space for its own purposes. In using Lefebvre's and Jacobs' framework to look at China, it becomes clear that similar processes of a change in social life have occurred there, but the discourse of "participatory planning" has not. In other words, while I make some important connections and similarities between the process of "death and life" of U.S. and Chinese cities, I recognize and emphasize that the process unfolds in different political-economic contexts.

Scholars have also taken an interest in gated communities in China (Miao 2003; F. Xu 2008; F. Wu 2010). The proliferation of private homeownership has profoundly affected the social life of many in urban China, including altering conceptions of marriage, individuality, freedom, privacy, and class (L. Zhang 2010; G. Chen 2011).²⁷ The creation of emerging middle classes is partially constituted through new formations in the built environment. The emerging middle classes in China are transforming urban space with the proliferation of gated communities, establishing social status through conspicuous consumption, and emulating upper-class tastes and lifestyles (Pow 2009; H. Ren 2013).²⁸ Evidence in the gated community literature points to increased socio-spatial segregation as class-based interests in privacy and freedom are mutually constituted through property. The following section reviews the China scholars studying the constitution of the emerging middle-classes in gated communities, luxury apartments, shopping malls and other “civilized” spaces.

Pow (2009) investigates the territoriality of middle-class interests, especially privacy, freedom, and private property established in gated communities.²⁹ For Pow (2007), “the moral ordering of urban spaces is a key component in shaping and structuring territoriality and social-spatial exclusion in Shanghai’s gated communities” (1554). The middle-class legitimize their demand for gated communities in order to maintain their ideals of “civilized modernity” by

²⁷ The ethnographic section of this chapter will discuss these changes in social life in more detail. I use the term “privatization of homeownership” in following the trend in the literature including those cited here because the prices are determined by the market and homes are obtained through mortgages as the responsibility of the individual. This points to an important distinction between the land market (state-owned and controlled) and the real-estate market (managed by both public and private developers). As this chapter will show, I emphasize that using the terms “public” and “private” are highly contentious to describe these relationships.

²⁸ Following Zhang (2010) I use the term “middle classes” because the middle-class is such a complex and heterogeneous category (see my discussion in Chapter 1 and 5 for a more in-depth analysis of class formation). The social formation of the middle classes comprises an amalgamation of various actors, structures, and practices.

²⁹ Territoriality is defined as the spatial manifestation of social power and the interrelation of society and space, wherein social power is secured through the control of space. Hsing (2010, 8) defines territoriality as “spatial strategies to consolidate power in a given place and time.”

excluding and “othering” rural migrants. These discourses will be further explored in the ethnographic section. I build on L. Zhang’s (2010) Lefebvrian approach to the “spatialization of class” to understand the emerging middle classes in the context of socioeconomic disparity as manifested in the built environment: “the production of commodity housing...provides the physical and social ground on which the making of the new middle classes becomes possible...Emerging places offer a tangible location of a new class to materialize itself through spatial exclusion” (L. Zhang 2010, 3-4). In conclusion, the extant literature on the emerging middle classes in China reveals that the middle classes as a dynamic and fluid category of people has begun to define itself through the exclusion of the “less-deserving other.” The middle classes’ interest in private property, social order, and consumption is thus mutually constituted through certain housing production based on values of individualism and freedom.

China’s housing market is one place where debates over public and private property are played out. In examining the relationship between private homeownership and poverty in China, G. Chen (2011, 2012b) argues that the new capitalist economy has created an environment where homeownership is virtually required, which results in poverty and housing deprivation for the lower classes. China’s housing market is considered to be “privatization-oriented” because private homeowners have better access to housing than non-owners (G. Chen 2012b). Even poor homeowners, though destitute, have better housing conditions and social advantages over non-owners (G. Chen 2012b). She writes, “the homeownership paradox occurs because both ends of the current ownership path (whether or not to own) cannot provide sustainable housing solutions for the poor. To own a housing property, for many poor families, is not a better choice, but only a ‘less bad’ arrangement among the limited options open to them” (G. Chen 2011, 1150). In other words, the state mode of production of space in urban China has resulted in a cultural

normative and societal imperative to own a home, which results in housing deprivation and poverty for non-owners. The privatization of housing in China is a contentious debate, where many argue that the proliferation of private homeownership in China has resulted in an increase in the gap between the rich and the poor and relative disadvantage to the poor (see for example G. Chen 2011). While G. Chen focuses on the disadvantage of housing ownership to the poor, I instead explore a case study of how private homeownership has affected the emerging middle classes in urban China with both positive and negative effects. My case study analyzes the changing role of the state in service provision, middle-class desires for increased security, the burden of high housing prices, the pressure for child's future success, and the deterioration of social life in the neighborhood.

As discussed in chapter 2, the local state in urban China plays a key role in controlling land-lease sales and profits politically and economically from land commodification and large-scale urban construction projects (Hsing 2010). As such, the social space of the middle-classes reinforces state power as it encourages private homeownership and construction of new apartment complexes. This process disguises the broader political-economic structures that are contributing to the extreme uneven development and inequality in urban China. The discourse of self-responsibility helps maintain state power. The Chinese state thus depends on the social space of the middle classes to maintain its legitimacy while protecting the middle classes' interests in private property and wealth accumulation.

III. Ethnographic Sketches of the Material and Social Relations of Housing

The following sections present an ethnographic sketch of the emerging social spaces of the middle classes as they engage with new production and consumption processes of the housing market. I illustrate in this chapter that the formation of the middle classes is highly

contested, heterogeneous, and dynamic. Following Pow (2009), L. Zhang (2010), and Ren (2013), the interests and preferences of the middle classes produce the built environment (i.e., gated communities). These class-based interests include protecting private property rights, individuality, freedom, privacy, and security, while maintaining a civilized, orderly, clean, and quiet environment. In analyzing the desires and frustrations of the middle classes in achieving these ideal living conditions, I interrogate the Lefebvrian theory of a mutually constitutive relationship between production of space, social formation, and practices of everyday life.³⁰ I conclude that new conceptions of homeownership, self-responsibility, and individuality reinforced by housing market reforms influence class formation and everyday life. These processes of social formation and individual experience include: the emerging middle classes in opposition to the migrant worker, desires of privacy and material security as realized in gated communities, social and cultural pressures related to obtaining private homeownership, and lack of social interaction in the street.

In the first section, I examine the relationship between the built and social environments of twenty residents living in apartment buildings in Nanjing. I compare the differences between *danwei* versus commercial housing and owners versus non-owners. I analyze the responses to questions regarding satisfaction levels of the living environment, compound management, security concerns, and desires for privacy. In the second section, I examine the social life and economic pressures of the emerging middle-classes in terms of high housing prices, children's future prospects, and declining social life in the neighborhoods.

A. Urban Landscape Transformations: From Danwei Housing to Gated Communities

³⁰ In the Chinese context, I specifically examine the state mode of production as processes of spatial formation shaped by the state, including those underpinned by notions of the free market, private property and exchange value.

There exists a clear and strong distinction both socially and materially between privately managed (*wuye guanli*) communities and state-provided *danwei* housing (see figures 43 and 44). For example, *danwei* housing provided by the state is considered by its residents to exhibit poor hygiene, unpleasant or deteriorating living conditions, and inadequate security. Many residents of *danwei* housing see the buildings, their neighbors, and sometimes themselves as low quality or uncivilized.³¹ Gated communities with *wuye guanli*, on the other hand, appear impeccably clean and orderly, have well-manicured gardens, boast of peace and quiet, and maintain reliable security guards and anti-theft systems. Many residents both inside and outside of the gates view these compounds as well as the residents as prestigious, high-class, and civilized. The *wuye guanli* assumes responsibilities previously regulated by the state, including the mail, trash, and security.



Figure 43: A typical *danwei* style apartment building built in the 1980s. Source: Photo by author, July 2013.

³¹ See chapters 2 and 4 for more discussion of these notions of self-identity and an analysis of “quality,” or *suzhi* in Chinese, and how one’s sense of identity is increasingly shaped in economic terms and measurements of value.



Figure 44: A typical *wuye guanli* housing compound built in 2012. Source: photo by author, May 2013.

Shaping the urban landscape of *danwei* versus *wuye guanli* housing

The Maoist state (1949-1976) sought to create an egalitarian society by eliminating private property and distributing comparable public housing by way of each urban citizen's work unit (*danwei*). Known as *danwei* housing, its architectural style and functionalist planning was heavily influenced by Soviet-style urban design (Bray 2005). *Danwei* housing provided by the state was designed and implemented with the intention of fostering equality and a collective social life.

Although few Chinese citizens would deny that material conditions have improved immensely with commercialized housing—private toilets, indoor heating and cooling, and reliable electricity to name a few—six research participants also reported discomforts of the privatized and commercialized housing, including the isolation and loneliness of their high-rise apartment buildings and the immense pressure of a life-long mortgage. While members of the middle classes often yearn for privacy and material comfort, many are also nostalgic for their previous social life in *danwei* housing. The conflict between *danwei* and *wuye guanli* housing

illustrates how new formations of property relations under a market economy shape social relations.

Of the twenty middle-class respondents that I interviewed,³² ten lived in privately managed gated communities, referred to in Chinese as having an *wuye guanli*, while ten lived in state-provided apartments, known colloquially as *danwei fenpeide*.³³ All of the respondents made very clear throughout the interview the type of community in which they lived because these two types of housing are different in China and indicate social status. For example, if I asked them about security, they might respond, “Oh no, you don’t understand. I live in a *danwei fenpeide* apartment. It’s not like the new apartments with *wuye guanli*. We don’t have a security system, let alone security guards,” or in response to a question about trash or recycling, they may respond, “I don’t know anything about that because the *wuye guanli* takes care of it for us.” If I asked them how much their home cost and if they took out a mortgage, they may respond, “Our house was extremely cheap because it was given to us by the *danwei* so we didn’t need to take out a loan.” Within these two distinct housing types, occupation and income varied greatly, though usually respondents with a higher income lived in apartments with *wuye guanli*. Also within both of these groups were owners and non-owners alike, which also may play a factor in housing and social life satisfaction.

Of the ten respondents living in *wuye guanli*, nine were generally *satisfied* with their living conditions in terms of their physical environs. In responding to the question of what they were satisfied with, respondents described secure safety mechanisms, peaceful environs, adequate trash or hygiene upkeep, and close proximity to public transportation. Their satisfaction

³² For an explanation of how I determined the category of “middle-class” and an explanation on methods and interviews, please see Chapter 3.

³³ This descriptive term was used by respondents to indicate that they or their parents had obtained the government-subsidized apartment at a low price through their work units.

reflects the overall acceptance of economic reform and general embrace of the new material comforts that capitalism provides. Li Xinyi, a female middle-class resident (non-owner) of an upscale gated community of high-rise apartment buildings that was just built less than a year ago, provides an image of the comforts of the *wuye guanli*. She pays 5,000 RMB/\$813 USD a month to rent her 2-bedroom apartment, about five times more than a typical *danwei* apartment costs to rent:

I have nothing to complain about this apartment. It's got a big garden outside so we can take a walk. It's got a gym and an indoor and outdoor swimming pool so I can go work out. And also it's very safe here too, the *wuye guanli* is very professional and they always help us with whatever we need, so it makes us really comfortable and feel safe staying here. (Interview with author, May 2013)

She gave some examples of the services the *wuye guanli* provided, which included 24/7 security guards at each entrance, 24/7 on-call repair service, trash, landscaping, and mail. This represents a broader shift in Chinese political-economic trajectory and society that devolves state power and involvement in everyday life to private companies.

Of the ten respondents living in *danwei* housing, seven reported that they were generally dissatisfied with the living environment, and three were satisfied. Of the seven middle class respondents reporting that they were overall dissatisfied with the *danwei* housing, most reported unruly, crude, or disruptive neighbors, poor security systems, poor hygiene, and poor trash collection and management. During an interview, Yang Juan, a 36-year old female middle-class (state-owned enterprise employee) and owner of a *danwei*-subsidized house, explained why she was dissatisfied with the living environment of public housing:

It would be better if this place had a *wuye guanli*, you know a normal management company. The parking lot is always full, and there is trash strewn about everywhere, it's pretty annoying. Because there's nobody to take responsibility for it, so people just park their cars wherever and there's nobody to pay attention to (*guan*) this problem. I think if we had a *wuye guanli* this apartment complex would be quite nice. But without a *wuye guanli*, the people who have relatively good qualifications (*tiaojian*) have already moved

out. So most of the people that live here are renters, people who work in the downtown area. You know, outsiders (*waidide*). People who own the homes here usually don't live here; it's very uncommon to run into a homeowner in this complex. (Interview with author, July 2013)

Yang Juan expresses common sentiments shared by many urban residents as a homeowner of *danwei* housing. The subject of her complaints highlights the retreating role of the welfare state and the increasing privatization of public services. The wealthier owners rent their homes to migrants working in the area as her house is located in downtown and in close proximity to many restaurants, bars, and markets. She not only dislikes her living environment because it lacks appropriate management services, including trash collection, but she also disapproves of the quality of her neighbors. Her words mark a clear distinction between owners and renters of *danwei* housing. The owners embody “high quality” residents, who are usually native Nanjingese working for the government or other official work unit. They are compared to non-owners of *danwei* housing exemplifying lower quality, who are usually rural migrants working manual labor or service jobs.

Yang Juan continues on to say during the interview that she thinks living in a “high-class” apartment would be well worth the money if she could ever afford it so that her daughter could be raised in a more “civilized environment” (*wenming huanjing*). Her words indicate that due to changing socio-spatial relations in urban China, social divisions between groups have also become very divisive since the middle class define their identity in opposition to the “Other” rural migrants. Therefore when rural migrants also inhabit the same apartment complexes as the “higher quality” local members of the middle class, they feel threatened, and uncomfortable. The identity of the middle-classes is predicated on Othering migrant workers and excluding those deemed unworthy through establishing class formation in the built environment (see chapter 4). Middle-class residents create discursive constructions of a “moral order” defined as an urban and

civilized modernity that is explicitly directed at the social exclusion of rural migrants (Pow 2007).

As a result of the recent influx of rural migrants, many participants automatically associate the *danwei* housing with lower quality or less civility because migrant workers are living there. 28-year-old Li Qingzi, resident of her family's *danwei* apartment, which her mother owns, often complained to me about her apartment complex. Before visiting her home in celebration of the Chinese New Year in early 2012, she warned me that because her family had spent their entire life savings on hospital bills when her father got cancer, they had no money left to buy a house, and as a result were still living in a *danwei* apartment given to them in the early 1990s, and as she described to me, was in terrible condition. Indeed, the compound was quite dilapidated and unkempt, though I was surprised that she expressed such anxiety about bringing me there as she seemed to think I would think less of her if I knew of her family's home's condition. The next year, during a formal interview, I asked her what aspects of her home she was satisfied with and what could be improved. She responded:

There is absolutely nothing to like about it, I hate it. It will be demolished at the end of this year so there's nothing to improve. It's loud, and the environment is just terrible. There's nothing good about it. It's old and falling apart. You've seen it yourself so you should know. It's the world's worst apartment complex. Almost everyone that lives there are outsiders (*wailairen*), and they all have too many kids, and they don't pay attention (*guan*) to them well enough because they're too poor, so the kids are always running around causing a ruckus, being loud, and dangerous. (Li Qingzi, July 2013)

One aspect of Li Qingzi's complaints is that the physical environs and built environment itself is not adequate. She also dislikes the people that live there, categorizing them as *wailairen*, an often derogatory term used to describe migrant workers, and describes them as overpopulated. There is a disconnect between her perception and the lived experience expressed in her view since migrant workers generally have no more than two children. I visited her apartment complex for

Chinese New Year in 2012 and although her house was more “run-down” than many others I had visited, it was a typical *danwei* apartment complex.

Her perception of the poor quality of her house is that which is juxtaposed as an alternative against luxury apartments. The deterioration of *danwei* housing, as well as the increased presence of migrant workers there, has resulted in devaluation of state-provided homes not only by the government, but also rejection of *danwei* housing by the citizens themselves. Their preferences reflect the overall political-economic shift from state-provided social safety nets to neoliberal discourses of self-responsibility. This shift challenges previous state-generated notions of social egalitarianism and introduces new social divisions as manifested through housing equality. As a result, the middle classes usually describe *danwei* housing as backward and reserved for rural migrants, who are socially excluded by residents who stereotype them as hickish, crude, and less-educated.

Another obvious trend in the shift from *danwei* to private housing is in the social services provided by the state versus private management companies. As Yang Juan relates above, private management companies are coveted aspects of gated communities, as they often take care of aesthetic landscaping, trash collection, and security. In L. Zhang’s (2010) study of the middle classes as constituted in gated communities, she takes interest in new forms of the devolution of state power to private companies. She describes how direct state intervention by way of the *danwei* social unit as provider of housing, cafeteria, and childcare has shifted to private real-estate management companies that are now primarily responsible for keeping social order and administration of local services, such as postal services:

But because these agents are commonly regarded as commercial entities, their political nature is often overshadowed by their market role and commercial interests... The rise of this privatized local governance should not be understood as a retreat of state power or the opening of civil society; rather, it signifies the emergence of a distinctive mode of

postsocialist governance that draws upon nonstate actors and combines neoliberal techniques of rule and the use of violence. (L. Zhang 2010, 187-88)

Her work reveals the convergence of socialist rhetoric and government with neoliberal governance as realized through the privatization of public services. The changing aspects of the state-market relationship in contemporary urban China is inherently connected to the shift from state-provided *danwei* housing to private homeownership, a shift that affects social relations and social life. Instead of the local state being directly involved in the coordination of daily life and social affairs (as it was with the management of *danwei* housing), it now instead encourages private homeownership to drive its own agenda of capital accumulation through construction of the built environment.

Desires for increased security

Although concerns about physical safety were relatively absent from everyday life for all of my respondents, concern for safety and security of material possessions was ubiquitous across all social groups. For example, most homes in both gated communities and un-gated communities alike had bars over the windows and doors, as well as some with barbed wire fences and 24/7 security guards (See figures 45 and 46). The concern of middle classes for their safety and security, especially in regards to their concern for material possessions, indicates the retreat of police presence, the widening gap between rich and poor, and the penetrating discourse of fear surrounding the rural migrant as an intruder and threat.



Figure 45: Security Concerns: This is a picture of a typical gated danwei apartment complex, where some of the residents have opted to get security bars over their windows. It is rumored that thieves have learned to climb up the side of buildings, so even those on the top floor have invested in security measures. Source: Photo by author, June 2013.



Figure 46: Security in a typical alley in Old Nanjing, where many of the homes have steel bars over the windows and doors. Source: photo by author, May 2013.

I follow Pow (2007) in asserting that “territoriality in Shanghai’s gated communities is constructed and enforced via a moral spatial regime that is fixated on the subject of the migrant worker/outsider-as-threat and intruder” (1542). New private property relations are reflected in the use of security devices that serve to exclude rural migrant workers and reinforce middle-class interests in private property regimes. Pow (2007) further explains,

to ensure that physical and social order in the neighbourhood is well maintained, a prime objective in gated communities is to keep unruly ‘trouble-makers’ from trespassing into the estate and ‘messing up’ the internal order and peace. Invariably, threats to the civilised order in gated communities are seen to come from migrant workers who are often perceived to be disorderly in conduct, lacking in basic civil etiquette and ignorant of the concepts of order and civility. (1551)

Security mechanisms are thus essential devices for securing middle-class identity through the exclusion of the rural migrant as Other. Through discussions of safety and security, I analyze how transforming notions of private property and class relations are constituted in the security mechanisms of gated communities.

In response to the question, “do you ever feel unsafe in your neighborhood,” most middle-class respondents replied, “No, I always feel very safe! I just have to watch my wallet, cell phone, and bike very carefully.”³⁴ Only two out of ten middle-class respondents living in *danwei* housing said they felt unsafe, citing the high numbers of migrants living in their compounds as reason. However, when I asked all of the research participants, “what security measures do you think are necessary for your apartment complex,” almost everyone responded that at the very least 24/7 security guards, video cameras, fully-enclosed compound gates, and security doors and windows (*fandaomen*) were necessary to keep out intruders. Both the fear of losing one’s material possessions and perceptions of migrants associated with thievery permeate everyday practice and discourse.

While most respondents living in apartments with *wuye guanli* reported high levels of satisfaction with their security systems, those living in *danwei* apartments generally expressed dissatisfaction with their security systems. For example, Fu Yang, a middle-class resident of her parent’s *danwei* apartment, admitted she often felt unsafe in her neighborhood:

³⁴ For the urban lower-class and migrant workers living in Old Nanjing, the answers were more mixed, with about half of respondents saying they never felt unsafe and half of respondents saying they felt unsafe.

Anyone can get through the four entrances to the compound because there isn't a gate. Anyone can easily pass through the compound's four entrances. It seems like they put up some security cameras recently, but I don't know if they're useful. There's so much that can be improved upon in terms of security! They don't even have a security gate or a security guard! Anyone can just walk in. I feel very unsafe, especially around the migrant workers. (Fu Yang, interview with author, May 2013)

The safety and security discourses revolve around two new aspects of social life in postreform urban China: the increasing presence of rural migrants and the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

Along with new notions of security, many of those in the Chinese middle-classes have expressed newfound needs for privacy and freedom. After Li Xinyi mentioned that she wanted to become a homeowner because she wanted privacy, I asked her what was so important about privacy to her. She replied,

Privacy, [*pause*] I just think it's part of the human rights, people should respect other people's privacy. Freedom, [*pause*] I just always liked freedom. And security, [*pause*] I'm a person that always feels insecure, I need something that makes me feel secure and having a house is one thing that can make me feel secure. I just feel like it's *my* house and no one can kick me out. That is the best type of security. (Interview with author, May 2013)

The transition from *danwei* to private housing marks a significant shift in social life in urban China, including growing social divisions especially between the lower and middle classes as exemplified in the need to keep intruding rural migrants as residents and thieves out of their proximity. Yang Juan furthers the emphasis on the importance of safety and security and the privatization of services in her community:

Normally, compounds always have a security guard at the gated entrances, including cameras on all sides of the compound. Something like this would be much better than what we have. But in our old and run-down complex, we don't have any of that. We have no mode (*mei banfa*) of going about doing that, so we don't get to have those security measures. If you look at a normal complex with *wuye guanli* those kinds of security measures are all quite good. (Interview with author, July 2013)

China's new modes of governance through privatization have shifted the relationship between the state and the market. The shifts emphasized here go beyond shifts in political-economic ideologies or modes of governance to include an examination of in-depth and penetrating changes in social relations.

B. Public and Social Life Transformations: From Egalitarian Community to Competitive Individuality

While the focus of the previous ethnographic section is on the built environment, the following section reviews changes in social life for the middle classes in urban China. I noticed that the members of the middle classes were highly stressed and anxious about their own economic situations as well as their children's future prospects of employment and wealth. During my frequent interactions with various age groups of the middle classes, concern about money, especially around housing prices and potential job prospects, constantly dominated topics of conversation. I link these concerns about financial security to the new conceptions of the relationship between the state, market, and society.

According to H. Ren (2013), the middle classes in China are highly unstable (i.e., constantly fluctuating) and inherently risk-prone because they usually obtain their wealth through unconventional or risky means. Furthermore, the middle classes are often in a tenuous position economically and live in virtually constant fear of losing their current position. According to some ethnographic studies of the Chinese middle classes, as a group they are extremely insecure in their social and economic status, and as such are constantly plagued by fear of failing and therefore motivated to invest heavily in their child's future success (L. Zhang 2010; H. Ren 2013). In my interactions with the Chinese middle classes, I also observed this insecurity and the ways in which this insecurity and vulnerability is a reflection of the inherent interconnection between state-market-society.

Burden and pressure of high housing prices

Many homeowners often complain about the social and economic pressures of owning a home. People with life-long mortgages deem themselves “house slaves” (*fāngnǚ*) to describe the way they felt about working to pay off a loan payment each month. Furthermore, many of the non-owners from all social groups reported immense societal and cultural pressure to buy a home and/or provide for his or her child’s home. In China today, social status is marked by homeownership, as well as the home’s value and desirability. For example, many women will not marry, or sometimes even date, a man who does not yet own a home (or at least have a mortgage on a home). Meanwhile, many parents, especially parents of sons, are under incredible pressure to buy a home for their child and will spend their entire life savings on it. While in Nanjing during the summer of 2013, I was riding on the back of an unofficial mo-ped taxi when I asked the elderly female driver how she got into the job. She replied that her son wanted to get married, but could not get married without first buying a house. Though she had technically already retired and was collecting social security benefits, she had bought the mo-ped and started taxiing people around the city to help contribute to her son’s future home.

Skyrocketing housing prices, social pressure to succeed in school so that one can get a good job and afford a home, and romantic relationship drama related to one’s homeownership situation are the most common topics of conversation among young people in China. A common topic of inquiry when one is first introduced to another is about homeownership; the number of homes, the amount of square meters, or the value of one’s home immediately reveals one’s social status. While I wanted to talk about demolition and redevelopment, my participants talked about putting aside pennies to save for their child’s future home. When I asked, “What are you most dissatisfied with in your life right now?” the most common response was, “high housing prices.”

One of the subtle contradictions I noticed in the interviews was the conflict over whether or not to buy a house. One of my interview questions asked, “Is buying or renting a home more appropriate for you?” Eighteen out of twenty middle-class respondents said they *prefer* to buy a house as opposed to rent one, though many confessed they would probably never actually be able to afford buying their own home. Only five out of twenty-one Old Nanjing residents hoped to own a home someday, and only two out of twenty migrant workers hoped to own a home someday, each group saying they simply would never be able to afford their own home. The reasons cited by the middle-class participants for wanting to own a home included cultural norms, social and parental expectations, a necessary step for the marriage, and the privacy, security, and freedom of owning your own home. For the most part, middle-class participants explained to me, “In China you must own a home. It’s socially unacceptable to rent, especially if you’re married. If you get married before owning your own home, you might as well have no home, and then you have no family (*meiyou jia*).”³⁵ Although many middle-class Chinese insisted during interviews that it is a cultural and social imperative to own a home before marriage, respondents from all social groups confessed they would probably never be able to afford their own home. Some maintained that because housing prices are so astronomical, there was no shame in renting a house. Low-income respondents in particular had been renting their homes for years either because they had a rural hukou, or were past retirement age, or were unemployed. The Old Nanjing local and migrant residents told me “it’s not big deal if you rent a home. Anyway that’s all I can afford.”

³⁵ It should be noted that for many people, owning a home that was subsidized by the danwei is acceptable in this case. Indeed, with the privatization of danwei homes, many work units will subsidize the purchase of a home of one’s own choice rather than provide a specific home at low-cost, similar to a voucher system. In terms of the cultural norm, it is acceptable to own a danwei home. In the context of the participants who don’t like their danwei homes, that’s usually because they are still living in their parent’s danwei home from 20 years ago and so the conditions are quite dilapidated.

For the middle classes, many decisions, from choosing a major in college (as that choice will determine future job prospects and income level) to deciding when to get married are influenced by the burden and pressure of housing prices and the social imperative for private homeownership. For the poorer residents of Old Nanjing, homeownership was not even a possibility. Across all social groups, the repeating idea of “There’s nothing I can do about it; money determines our situation” was pervasive across all social groups. For the poorer classes, that meant, “I’ll never be able to own a home.” For the middle classes, that meant, “the burden of high housing prices is creating a lot of stress for my family and me.”

The topic of skyrocketing housing prices and of the pressure and burden of being able to provide for a home was ubiquitous in everyday conversation across all social strata. For example, Yang Juan told me:

Our homes here in China are so expensive. The houses in the buildings across the street are 30,000 RMB [\$4,878 USD] per square meter. A house similar to mine would normally cost 3 million RMB [\$488,000]! This price is quite frightful! So I could not afford to buy a house in the city without the *danwei* subsidy. The housing prices are quite terrible. (Interview with author, July 2013)

I noticed that people did not show interest in making fundamental or structural claims to the challenges of the new economic system, but instead focus solely on the stress and pressure of social reproduction and providing for the family. Following Gramsci, the cultural hegemony of the local state and upper classes perpetuates and reinforces the ideology of capitalism (Jessop 1997; Shin 2013). In conclusion, the burden of high housing prices has penetrated everyday life in urban China, which reflects a broader societal change in the context of economic reform that reflects new conceptions of homeownership, self-responsibility, and individuality as key to the new middle-class identity.

Immense pressure to buy a home was related to the idea that middle-class respondents in particular felt that they must own a home and that there was no other option. The following quotes exemplify new understandings of private property and desire for freedom in post-reform urban China. Fu Yang, a 30-year-old middle class female, explains why it is so important to buy a house in China, especially before marriage (even though she told me later that by her calculation, it is actually more economical to rent than to buy a house):

Chinese people would definitely choose to buy a house, because we don't like to rent houses. If they are living somewhere long-term, and they have a family, then they would prefer to buy a house...Because Chinese people take family very seriously, so if they buy a house they feel like they really have a family and it's their own. But if they are just renting, then it will never be theirs, it's always someone else's. If I had enough money, I would definitely choose to buy a house. But if my economic conditions don't allow that situation, then I must rent. That's my only option. But while I'm renting I will feel that it's not my home. (Interview with author, July 2013)

One common phrase used to describe couples that get married before buying a house is “naked snails without shells” to signify that the new couple has no home or family if they are only renting. Indeed, a popular soap opera on TV was titled, “Snail Home” (*wo ju*) and chronicled the tales of several people living in Beijing struggling with high housing prices and chasing the dream to own a home. Fu Yang's words reveal that new imperatives for private homeownership combined with the pressures of high housing prices have transformed daily life in urban China. Li Xinyi also told me about her immense and passionate desire to be a good mother and provide for the things that her children need:

I don't like living under someone else's roof. You don't get any freedom. The landlord can come by anytime and check your place, invade your privacy, give you attitude because you are the tenants, even though you pay rent every month on time. I feel if I have kids I want to provide them a stable life, which means I don't want to have to constantly move, that's the most important thing, when I have kids I want to give them a very stable living situation. I'll need to buy a house for that. (Interview with author, May 2013)

These examples indicate new imperatives of private homeownership as based on new private property relations under post-reform China. I do not suggest that the state discourse on neoliberalism has dominated everyday discourse and directed thoughts and actions in an unidirectional manner, but rather that the Chinese middle classes themselves accept and promote the narrative of needing to buy a home.

Concern and investment in children's future success

L. Zhang (2010) defines the middle-classes as marked by three distinct qualities: “their moment of emergence, their highly heterogeneous composition, and their heightened sense of insecurity” (7). The insecurity and fear of the middle classes of falling behind are notable characteristics of this group. I noticed a strong sense of deep desires to provide their family's and child's needs, especially in their child's future as a productive citizen. During my fieldwork in 2011-2012, my neighbors in Old Nanjing had a 5-year-old daughter in kindergarten. Their daughter had three classmates from school that would often come over to their house for play dates and the eight parents of the four girls were close friends. The three classmates were from middle class families. The neighbors and their family friends became very close friends of mine as well, as I helped their daughters with English and they frequently invited me over for dinner on the weekends. After dinner, the women would frequently sit around the dinner table and chat about their daughter's progress in school or the latest endeavor or fad to help their daughters achieve higher marks in school (e.g., music lessons, dietary supplements). During the spring of 2012, everyday conversation was dominated by the stress of ensuring their daughters would pass the entrance examinations at the best primary schools in the city. “It is important that my daughter be placed in a good primary school for first grade. If she doesn't get into a good school now, she will only fall farther and farther behind her classmates. She will never have any hope of

passing the college entrance exam at that point.” The mother of the family, Zhu Chongyang, went to great lengths in researching the schools, waiting in long lines, preparing her daughter for the reading and writing tests, and talking to school officials. She said to me one day near the end of the spring semester, “I have a heavy burden on my heart every day. It affects my relationship with my husband and my daughter. It is the greatest stress I have ever experienced, not knowing which school my daughter will go to.” They discussed spending their entire savings on sending her to a private school, but then had to wonder how they would pay for her college. Eventually, they were thrilled to report that their daughter was accepted into an average public school not far from their home.

When I returned in summer 2013, the daughters were finishing up first grade. The parents reported that first grade was incredibly stressful, involved frequent testing, and hours of homework every night. One night that summer after their daughters’ final exams, one of the mothers, looking exhausted as she retired with her feet up on one of the chairs, said,

There isn’t a day when we don’t have some kind of business to do. All of my free time is taken up helping my daughter with her homework, I don’t have any time for myself. There’s so much pressure on them at school, it’s too much sometimes, and so much pressure on us as well to make sure they do well. Everything is so busy all the time. (Han Yangrui, interview with author, June 2013).

The mothers nodded their heads in agreement at this comment. Indeed, this was a common complaint by the mothers. I could hear my neighbor helping her daughter with her homework every night for hours, often late into the night. I asked one of the other mothers what she liked to do for fun, and she responded, “Because right now I have made my 5-year-old daughter’s studies top priority, I don’t really have time for my own hobbies. Right now she has a lot of homework, so after work I always accompany her in doing homework” (Yang Juan, interview with author, July 2013). What can account for this pressure? I once asked them, “but you all have daughters,

so maybe you don't have as much pressure to buy a house." To which they responded, "it is true that we do not have as much pressure as families with sons to save money, but we must cultivate our daughters personalities, educations, and suzhi levels so that they can attract one of the top-choice males that has a house. Otherwise we are hopeless for our daughter's and our own future." They also expressed the sentiment that their daughter might need to help pay for the house, or they might need to provide gift's for the husbands family, or the daughter might be expected to own a car to make her more desirable for the male. This phenomenon is not unusual in China, as similar processes in New York City, South Korea, and Japan have been documented. Rather this reflects a combination of cultural norms, the One Child Policy, and economic transition in China that has exacerbated these anxieties.

Deterioration of social and public life

Out of the twenty middle class respondents, seventeen reported that their relationships with their neighbors were non-existent. This information contrasts with the interviews with the 21 Old Nanjing residents, where 20 out of 21 of the respondents reported that their relationships with their neighbors was excellent, saying "they're just like family to me." When prompted about what kind of interaction Old Nanjing residents have with their neighbors, the respondents had similar answers, including cooking and eating dinner together, helping each other with laundry, and helping each other with babysitting duties. The extreme contrast in neighborly relations between Old Nanjing and the apartment complexes indicates a dramatic change in society in concurrence with the move from one-story houses to high-rise apartment buildings.

I define public life as social interaction and life in the street. I show that the privatization of homeownership in China has resulted in the death of public life in the lack of socialization in streets similar to that observed in the United States (Jacobs 1961). I understand this shift as

contextualized in the promotion of new housing structures for the nuclear family has resulted in increased isolation and loneliness for apartment building residents. As Jacobs (1961) asserts, the death of the interactions in the streets of American cities resulted in the death of public life. In China, when people moved into high-rise apartment buildings, a dramatic shift changed in that they stopped having close relationships with their neighbors as the death of the space of the street in urban China occurred. This comparison between Chinese and American cities does not account for any effect of cultural norms, which are important factors. The purpose of the comparison is to draw out some similarities between two seemingly different contexts.

Most respondents reported the complete lack of social life in their compound and feeling very isolated and lonely. Li Hua, a 29-year-old male middle class reported, “like most of the modern Chinese urban populations: don’t ask, don’t tell. Sometimes we see each other and say hi and that’s it and we don’t ask them about their life and they wouldn’t do so either, and personally I know very little about my neighbors” (Interview with author, July 2013). Another 29-year-old female respondent said, “I don’t have any contact whatsoever with my neighbors, we are all closed doors” (Li Qingzi). Many of the other responses were the same, indicating that the social and material changes brought about by economic reforms changed a part of daily life and the culture of the street.

I once brought Li Qingzi to visit my home in Old Nanjing. As we were walking to my home from the bus stop, almost every neighbor stopped and chatted with me as we walked down my street. Li Qingzi was shocked at their hospitality and was in disbelief about the close social interactions I had with my neighbors in Old Nanjing. I told her that stopping to chat with people as you walked down the street—whether going to work or going to the bathroom—was an everyday occurrence for me. Not only that, but we often shared meals, food, and other services

like babysitting or English tutoring on my part, while my neighbors took care of me when I got food poisoning. My friends from the middle classes could not believe this when I told them because it was so different than their lives in the apartment complexes, many of which were quite isolating. The transforming social space of urban China constitutes and is constituted by changing property and class relations as based on the new private property regime. Changing conceptions of the state and market in urban China profoundly influence social relations on an individual level in everyday life. In following Lefebvre, the mutually constituted relationship between space-state-market-society is based on the housing market reforms. This is exemplified in changing notions of private property, which create new conceptions of homeownership, self-responsibility, and individuality, causing new social pressure and stress in buying a house and providing for the family.

IV. Conclusion

Due to the changes in the mode of production and material life in postsocialist China, socio-spatial relations have shifted with the commodification of land and proliferation of private homeownership. The urban landscape is thus experiencing a conflict between the retreating role of the welfare state and active role of the state in shaping space and urban life (see Pusca 2008 and Schwenkel 2012 for examples of landscape and the role of the state in other “post-socialist” spaces of Albania, Czech Republic, and Vietnam). The social and material shifts as reflected in the changes of the living environments and popular discourses reflect a broader political-economic message that rejects the overbearing welfare state and largely embraces free market economics.

I have argued that changing conceptions of the state and market in urban China profoundly influence everyday social relations on an individual level. Indeed, the opaque and

dynamic issue of commodified state-owned land and private homeownership reflects the complexity of the relationship between state and market in urban China (Hsing 2006b).³⁶ In L. Zhang's (2010) words, China is a "hybrid form of political economy, which combines market forces, socialist state rule, and neoliberal techniques" (4). In the case of the commodification of land and housing in post-reform China, the Chinese real estate market seems wrought with contradictions. On the one hand, the private and public are distinct material spheres as public *danwei* housing is socially and materially different from the privately managed gated communities. On the other hand, the distinction between public and private housing is blurred in China since one might live in privatized-*danwei* housing that is simultaneously subsidized by the university, purchased by the owner, built by a state-owned construction enterprise, and managed by a private company.

While the change from public life to private life has already been well documented in the capitalist democracies of the West (Weintraub 1997), China provides an interesting case study to test critical theories in a recently transformed society under capitalist and socialist political-economic policies. Due to the pervasiveness of housing prices in everyday conversation topics, it is imperative to include a chapter that studied the immense political-economic and social changes regarding the commercialization of housing. The ethnography illustrated how social relations and social reproduction has been transformed with the proliferation of private homeownership in urban China. One form in which new social divisions are played out in various parts of the world is in housing inequality as the wealthy elite barricade themselves behind highly-securitized gated communities alongside rapidly expanding urban slums, which is made especially obvious in rapidly developing countries such as China, Brazil, and India (see

³⁶ I use the term "commodified land" in following Hsing's (2010) Polanyinian approach to describe the unique land market in urban China because all land is owned by the state but leased to public and private developers.

Caldeira 2000; Roy 2011; Doshi 2012). I follow their lead by specifically focusing on the effects of economic reforms on housing inequality and social relations.

The highly contested social spaces of the tenuous middle classes materialize in the differentiation between *danwei* and *wuye guanli* housing. The residents' perceptions of the built environment and notions of security and privacy within the context of the state's changing political-economic environment exhibit the complexity of the state-market-society relationship. Lefebvre's notion of the production of space helps to unpack the phenomenon of the emerging mental, physical, and social spaces of the middle classes. The production of row after row of identical high-rise apartment buildings reflects Lefebvre's notion of the production of abstract space as a perpetual cycle of expanding homogenous space while obviating inequalities. Abstract space as produced through the drive of capital and the state to accumulate wealth and power for the purposes of producing for exchange-value. Meanwhile, abstract space creates highly variable spaces of material inequality, such as the social and economic inequality between town and country (Lefebvre 1991, 277).

There are political debates in China and around the world that contest whether state regulation or deregulation allows for more or less economic growth and benefits for the largest amount of people. Meanwhile, debates in the scholarly literature on China is furthering the exploration of how social relations in China are changing as a result of the hybrid economy of free markets and state control. The state plays a very active role in regulating the real estate market, while adopting managing techniques that promote self-governing and encourage various modes of privatization and consumption (L. Zhang 2010). The theoretical debates on the question of the role of the state in the production of space primarily involve Lefebvre in his understanding of the mutually constitutive relationship between the production of space,

formation of class, and everyday practice. These debates are effecting everyone in China in a major way, though the focus of this chapter is on the emerging middle classes as homeowners or aspiring homeowners that are insecure and anxious about their socioeconomic position, and as a result, project their anxiety onto the success of their children. The state is exacerbating socioeconomic inequality by encouraging private homeownership and its key role in working with developers to produce both homogenous and highly differentiated spaces. The state is embroiled in the market because it controls all land-lease exchange and profits economically and politically from large-scale urban infrastructure projects. Increasing a sociological, geographical, and anthropological understanding of the ways that broader political-economic shifts on global and national levels influence people's daily lives is crucial to improving our prospects for happier and healthier lives in the future.

CONCLUSION

While international trade proliferates and many developing countries experience record levels of GDP growth, evidence in the urban studies literature points to increased socioeconomic segregation and a widening gap between the rich and the poor in the countries (Sassen 1999; Brenner 2004; Banerjee-Guha 2010). Questions thus arise concerning the role of privatization and neoliberalism in exacerbating uneven development and thus increasing social tension between the winners and losers of laissez-faire economics (Peck and Tickell 2002; Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodriguez 2002; Smith 2002). Amongst these changes, the state has not lessened in importance. In fact, the state is more important than ever as the site of contestation between the benefits of state regulation versus deregulation of the economy. This debate takes center stage in political debates over types of state formation in countries around the world. These political disputes over market regulation and privatization affect social relations and everyday life. Dramatic evidence of these global processes is China's entrance into the global economy and its transition to a privatized economy. This provides the global and national contexts that situates my local study in broader processes of change.

My main findings in this thesis include the following conclusions. In chapter 4, I find that though the importance of the *hukou* in daily life is decreasing, the material and social divisions between the urban and the rural in China is increasing. While K. Chan's (2012) finds that the *hukou* on the macro-scale is contributing to major barriers to the growth of the middle-class in China, my study finds that on the micro-scale, the *hukou* is one of many barriers that rural migrants face to urban citizenship. My study is significant for understanding citizenship beyond political-legal definitions of *hukou* and new classifications of social capital that depoliticize class and instead use distinctions of taste. These urban-rural social and cultural divisions are made

clear through the classification of certain behaviors associated with the rural as “uncivilized,” which denies rural migrants their right to the city through everyday practices of exclusion. Symbolic and cultural capital thus intertwined with economic capital mutually constitute of class divisions. The state-constructed definition of citizenship (i.e. *hukou*) is rearticulated through individuals’ determinations of what constitutes a worthy resident of the city through behavior and consumption. Local and migrant urban residents contest these categories and reappropriate state discourses of citizenship and *suzhi* (inner-quality). Migrants too push back against state attempts to manage population flows by producing and occupying urban space for themselves.

In chapter 5, I show that the landscape as a “way of seeing the world” symbolizing the material concretization of power creates class divisions. The landscape of Old Nanjing is constituted in representations and practices. The class identities constructed through the landscape illustrate cultural hegemony. Old Nanjing residents both consent to and resist class categories of “modern” and “backward” through various representations (e.g., stereotypes) and practices (e.g., chatting in the street). The representations and practices of Old Nanjing therefore both challenge and accept the state-constructed singular definition of urban modernity. Some practices of Old Nanjing openly contest the power relations of the state, either by refusing to evict or negotiate with the authorities, or through illegal activity such as prostitution, selling pornography, or selling food without a license. While L. Zhang (2010) also finds class divisions to be mutually constituted in the built environment of the middle classes, I draw on her work while focusing on old cities and poor communities to find how recent economic reforms and new class divisions have affected these communities. Finally, in chapter 6, I show how state restructuring resulted in a change in both the built environment (e.g., proliferation of high-rise apartments) and social environment (e.g., the death of public life and community). These

changes dramatically affected daily life and everyday practice in urban China. While G. Chen (2011, 2012a, 2012b) finds that private homeownership has resulted in mostly negative affects on poor populations, I show that there were both positive and negative affects on the middle classes.

My study contributes to the urban studies literature by providing a spatial approach to class divisions through an interrogation of the rural/urban relationship, as well as investigating the social construction of landscape and the built environment. I extend the China studies literature by providing an ethnographic study of perceptions and attitudes of in-groups and out-groups, which sheds light on the current nature of social cohesion in urban China. I expand the geography literature by confirming with evidence the theoretical development of L. Zhang's (2010) notion of the "spatialization of class" in poor communities. Moreover, I examine how the privatization of homeownership has changed social relations in urban China.

I have argued that social divisions in China can be partially explained through the concepts of production of space, cultural hegemony, and cultural capital. In this thesis, I have presented evidence that suggests Lefebvre and Gramsci provide appropriately complementary theoretical frameworks for explaining the social changes brought by economic reform in urban China. For example, in following Lefebvre, one of the primary arguments of the thesis is that class divisions are mutually constituted in spatial production of the built and social environments. I argue that Lefebvre is a particularly important theorist in my case study due to his explicit concerns on the role of the state and his direct engagement with the state modes of production. Gramsci also engages more deeply with structural aspects of power relations, while acknowledging the inherent fluidity and contested nature of power. Jacobs (1961) describes

rational urban planning and gated communities in the U.S. that are strikingly similar to what I witnessed in China.

These theoretical frameworks are not a perfect fit for my work, and some caveats must be explicitly expressed. These theories were developed in a specific historical, political and cultural context that greatly influenced each theorist's research and experience that informed his or her theory. Because China is not a democratic country, one could argue that it is difficult or even impossible to use these theories in the Chinese context. Some might even argue that the theories are not applicable to China because China is not a capitalist country, while others argue that China is masquerading as a socialist state with capitalist characteristics. I am not trying to fit the theories into a box containing my data, but rather to use them to gain theoretical insight into my case study as a broader picture of the human condition. I have attempted to show in this thesis that these theories are most appropriate for drawing out the nuances of the Chinese context. I illustrated in this thesis how components of the theory can be used to draw out certain aspects that would otherwise remain unnoticed. An example of this can be drawn out from Lefebvre's theory of the right to the city.

The "right to the city" literature has come to encompass a myriad of different studies related to social justice. When these studies take place in Western democratic countries, they focus on the "right to the city" in terms of one or more of the following paradigms: to speak and be heard; political participation and citizenship; the link between exclusion, rights, and justice; the privatization of public space; access to public space; right to assemble; the struggle to produce differentiated space; representation in public space; the production of public space and the centrality of difference (Mitchell 2003). When I read about the right to the city in the Western context, especially in regards to growing literature on the fight over public space, at first

I struggled to see its relevance to the Chinese context. At first glance, it seems as though there is no such thing as the right to the city in China, because there conceptualization of public space in terms of political speech, representation, and participation is unknown. Admittedly freedom of speech is contested, as there are protests and petitions that happen frequently. For example, despite widespread internet censorship, many people obtain devices and networks that allow them to disregard the internet sites that are blocked. Though grievances are often spoken in the petitions to the central government in Beijing, they are rarely heard. If heard, almost never acted upon by the authorities. When examining the right to the city as situated in the Western paradigm of rights constituted through law, national citizenship, and the state's justice system, it can be difficult to understand the utility of the right to the city concept in the Chinese context.

However upon a closer examination of Lefebvre's (1996) *Writings on Cities* I came to a different conclusion. For Lefebvre, the right to city is a cry and demand for the transformation and renewal of urban life calls for a fundamental and radical transformation of the totality of economic, social, and political relations. Lefebvre understands the right to the city beyond the limitations of the current state structure as a type of citizenship not based on nationality, but rather earned by inhabitants through everyday life (Purcell 2003). Lefebvre does *not* understand the right to the city as the right to speak and participate as filtered through democratic state institutions. Rather, he urges us to fundamentally reject the current institutional structures that operate in democratic and Western contexts, and conceive of the right to the city as a direct decision-making process by all inhabitants to produce urban space (i.e. urban space to mean not only concrete space, but also the lived, conceived, and perceived space as constitutive of the social relations and everyday practices of urban life). Lefebvre directly resists the existing power structures of capital and the state, urging us to conceive of entirely new possibilities for the right

to the city as the right to appropriation and participation in the process of producing urban space. In this sense, the right to the city can indeed be applied to the Chinese context as a way to conceive of entirely different social relations under newly established power structures (He and G. Chen 2012). I thus used the right to the city to further understand not only how the middle classes both accept and reject the presence of migrants in the city, but also how migrants' re-appropriation of urban space to support livelihoods and their rejection of the urban as they plan to return home in the future is both a result of and a pushback against state discourse. Although in the end the right to the city did not take a primary spot in my thesis, in the future I will continue to pursue its application in the Chinese context in relation to rural-urban migration and private homeownership.

In the end, this thesis raised many questions. Do actors and agents really pay any attention to structure? How much control do structures have over our agency and what is the extent of our freedom? Does it matter that some of us are communist, some of us are socialist, and some of us are democratic, or is it all just the same anyway? What implications does further economic reform have for the people of China and the U.S.? What happens if when one travels to a somewhat similar developmental and neoliberal state in a different historical and cultural context? Are the outcomes completely different or are there some similarities? I believe that there are worthy comparisons that could be drawn out of comparative fieldwork in China. In my future work, I also plan to further investigate the urban planning discourse in China and its relation to the state. I hope to interview government officials and urban planning specialists to gain further insight into how their plans shape the perceived and lived spaces in urban China. In future research, I will further investigate zoning laws, textual analysis, archival work, and surveys in order to expand my perspective beyond a heavy reliance on interviews.

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Appendix A (interview questions):

Name 姓名

Sex 性别

Age 年龄

Ethnicity 民族

Hometown 家乡（籍贯）

Birthplace 出生地

Current address 现居地

Personal income 个人收入（月）

Family income 家庭收入（月）

Marital status 婚姻状况

Educational level 教育程度

Major 专业

Occupation 职业

How long you have lived in Nanjing? 在南京居住时间

How long you have lived at your current address? 在目前地址居住时间

About your life 关于生活:

1. What's your best memory from when you were younger?
你小的时候在家最美好的记忆是什么？
2. What are your hobbies? Do you participate in any social activities in your neighborhood or Old Nanjing, such as dancing or Tai Chi?
你有什么爱好？你在老城南有没有参加一些社交活动，如跳舞、打太极等？
3. What are your hopes and dreams for the future?
你未来的生活目标、计划、愿望是什么？
4. How many kids do you have? What hopes do you have for your kid?
你有几个孩子？你对你的孩子有什么希望？
5. What is the thing that you are most satisfied with in your life? What are you most unsatisfied with?
你对你目前的生活感到最满意的方面是什么？最不满意的方面又是什么？
6. Are you involved in any business ventures? What kind? Why did you choose to go into this type of business and how did you get involved?
你在做生意吗？在哪里做生意？做怎样的生意？你为什么选择你正在做的生意？你怎样开始做这样的生意的？

About your neighborhood/Old Nanjing 关于小区或者老城南:

7. Why did you move here? 你为什么搬到这里？
8. For Old Nanjing residents only: If you could choose, would you live in a house in Old Nanjing or in a high-rise apartment building?
如果你可以自己选择，你会住在老城南的老房子或者住在高楼？

9. Are you renting this house or did you buy it? For how much? Did you take out a mortgage? 这套房子是买的还是租的? 多少钱? 你贷款买吗?
10. From the perspective of both long term and short term, do you think it's better to buy or rent a home? 从长期和短期的角度来看, 买房跟租房哪一个对你来说更适合?
11. For rural migrants only: Are you homesick? What do you miss about home? 你想家吗? 想家乡的什么呢?
12. For rural migrants only: In the future do you plan to stay in Nanjing or return to your hometown? 你在未来计划留在南京还是回你家乡?
13. According to your experience, what do you like about your neighborhood/Old Nanjing? What do you think still needs to be improved? 根据你在老城南的个人经历和体会, 你住这里最喜欢什么方面? 这里什么方面还需要改进?
14. How are your relationships with your neighbors? How are your interactions? Do you exchange any mutual support, such as eating together or helping each other with child care? 你现在住的社区邻里之间关系如何? 你跟邻居的交流怎样? 你跟他们有没有互相帮助(比如烧饭、带孩子等)?
15. How would you describe Old Nanjing? What is special about it? What is different about Old Nanjing than other places? What kind of environment does your current residence have? Do you have a security system? 您怎么描述老城南? 老城南有什么特别的? 老城南跟其它的地方有什么不同? 你怎么描述这个小区附近? 你现在住的地方是怎样的环境? 在小区吗? 有没有保安和治安管理?
16. What kind of changes have you experienced or noticed about Old Nanjing recently? 老城南最近有什么变化?
17. For locals only: Have you noticed that more outsiders are moving here to work? What kind of influence has this had on Old Nanjing? 你有没有发现更多的外来工过来住这里? 对老城南有什么影响?
18. Do you normally interact with local Nanjingese? What about outsiders or migrants? Are you friends with them? Are you willing to be friends with them? 你平时跟南京本地人/外地人接触? 做朋友呢? 你愿不愿意跟本地人做朋友?
19. Do you think your place of residence is safe? 你在这里有没有感觉到不安全?
20. What kind of security measures and safeguards does your apartment complex have? Regarding safety, what kind of things does this apartment do well? What things still need to be improved? 你认为保障小区治安的措施都有哪些? 关于治安, 现在这个小区哪些地方你觉得做的好? 哪里还需要提升?
21. Have you ever felt excluded or discriminated against? 你有没有感觉到排外或者歧视?

About demolition 关于拆迁:

22. If you were demolished, how would you react? What kind of action would you adopt? 假如咱们这里拆迁了, 你会有怎样的反应? 会采取哪些行动?
23. How would your life change if you were demolished? Do you think it would change for the better or for the worse? 你的生活会怎么改变? 你估计会变更好还是更差?

24. How do you see the current urban redevelopment in Nanjing? Are you satisfied with it?
你对现在南京的整体城市改造怎么看？你满意吗？
25. Old city demolition has what good and bad aspects?
老城拆迁有什么好处？有什么坏处？

Appendix B (English translation on page 125-26):**地块设计**

中心商务区7号地块功能主要以高端办公和科研办公为主，是整个核心区的办公中心，配套商业购物活动集中在主要街道两边和北侧集中商业。本区建筑以超高层塔楼为主，搭配裙楼，在行人的尺度留出足够的视线通廊和公共空间。同时在高层间鼓励建筑与建筑之间的相互连接，形成一系列多层次交流和休闲平台。在该区域内须保证每个地块所包含的功能是混合的，并不对每个具体地块的功能进行严格限定。

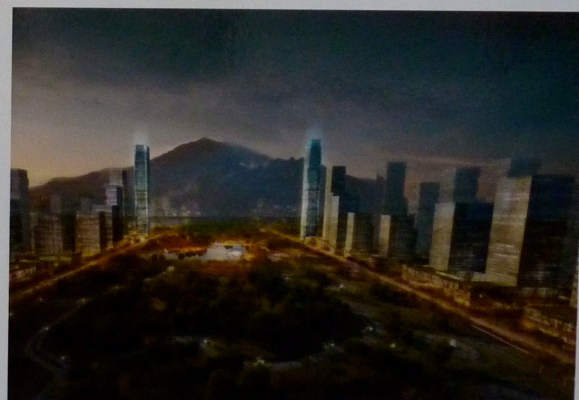
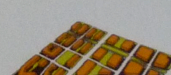
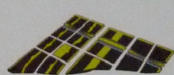
结合运粮河水边景观，地块建筑进行退让和功能布局，形成特色商业街区及景观办公区，并与8号地块形成紧密自然的联系。



街块

裙房

塔楼



Appendix C (English translation on page 148-49):**致西街地块危旧房改造项目被征收居民的一封信**

尊敬的被征收居民：

西街地块危旧房改造项目是市政府的重点工程，是改善百姓居住环境、造福子孙后代的民心工程。该项工程自实施征收工作以来，得到了广大居民的大力支持，已有 40% 以上的住户与房屋征收部门达成协议并实施搬迁。到目前为止，仍有部分居民提出不切实际的想法，漫天要价，等待观望。现征收工作即将进入征收补偿决定阶段，在此我们再次郑重告之：

等待观望、待价而沽只能是空耗时间和精力，失去人性化照顾的机遇。早搬迁，得实惠，后搬迁，会受损。

此次征收工作将严格依照南京市《国有土地上房屋征收与补偿办法》及相关配套文件执行，对于在规定期限内进行务实协商的被征收居民，房屋征收部门可在政策范围内给予适当照顾。

对于被搬迁户的合法建筑（产权房和承租房）在规定期限内不能与房屋征收部门达成协议的，将报请人民政府依法作出征收补偿决定。补偿决定下达后，对在规定期限内仍未搬迁并提出与政策不符、坚持无理要求的被征收人将依法申请人民法院强制搬迁，以确保征收工作的顺利进行。

为使广大被征收居民的利益不受损失，我们再次诚挚地敦促西街地块危旧房改造项目的被征收居民，一定要认清形势、顾全大局、克服困难，积极配合，务实协商，与房屋征收部门达成协议，早日搬迁。